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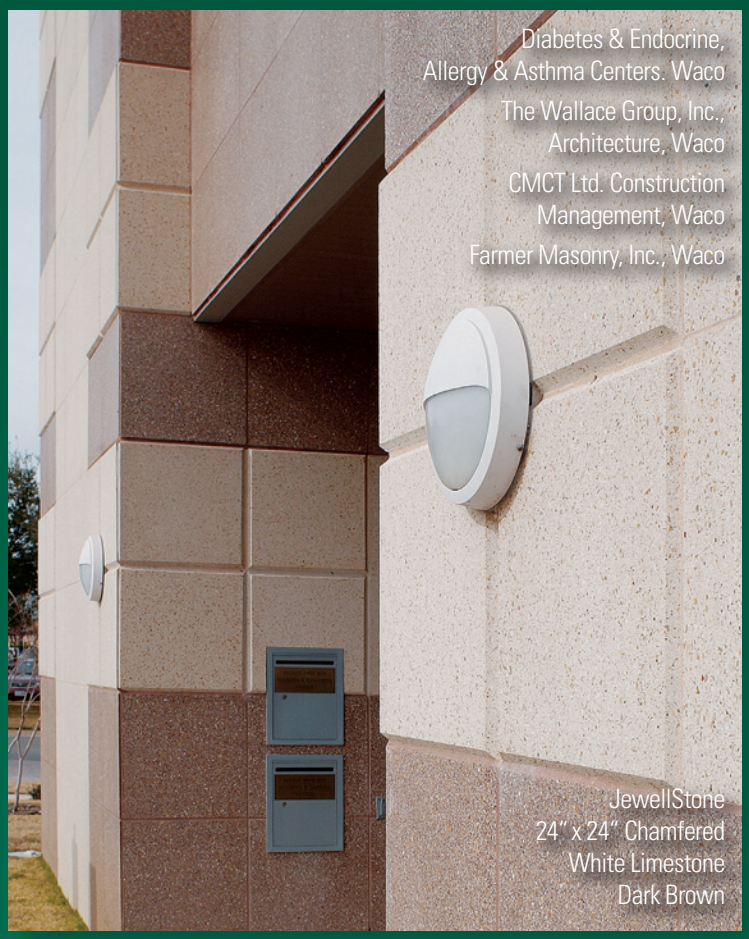

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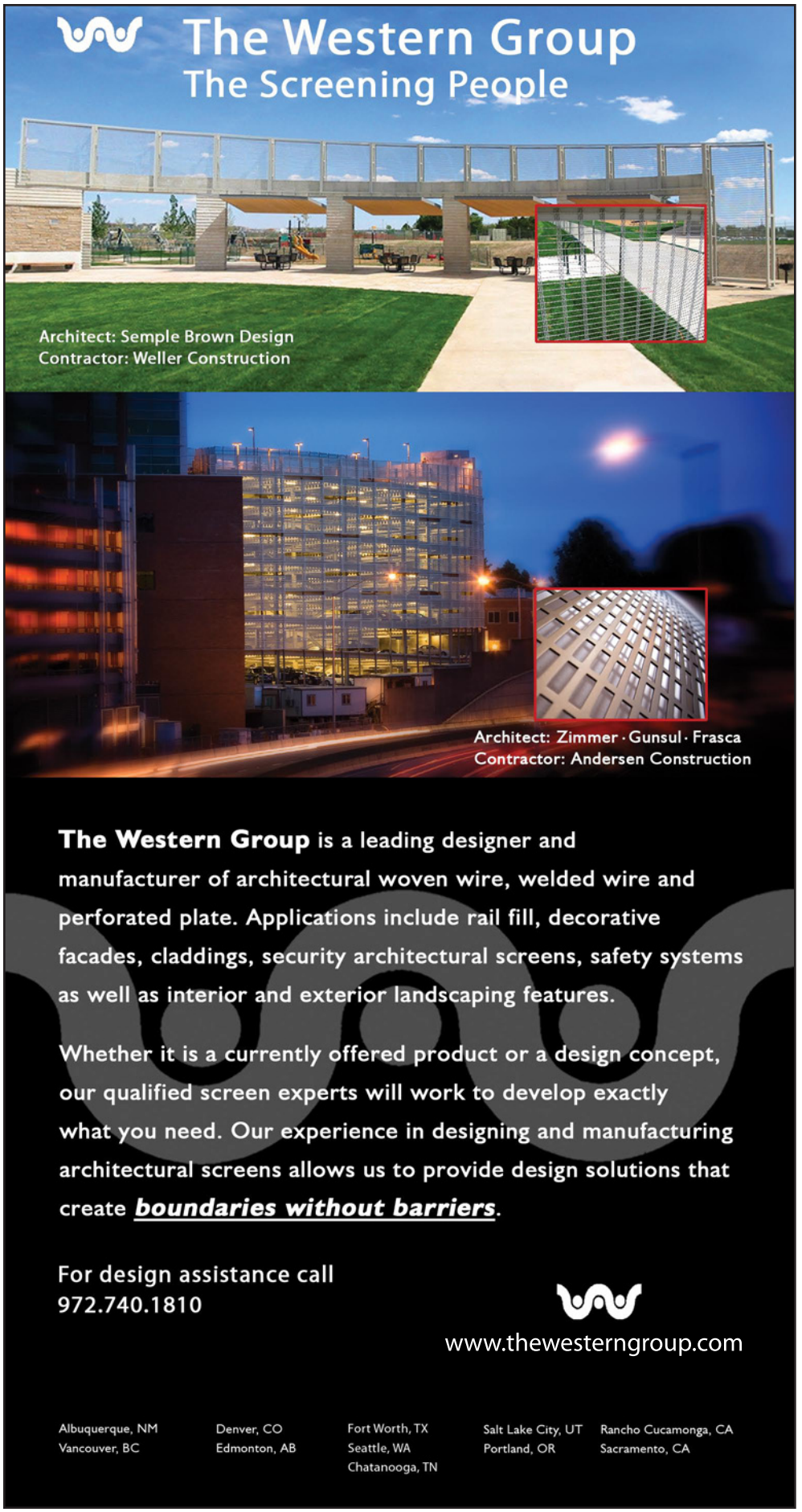

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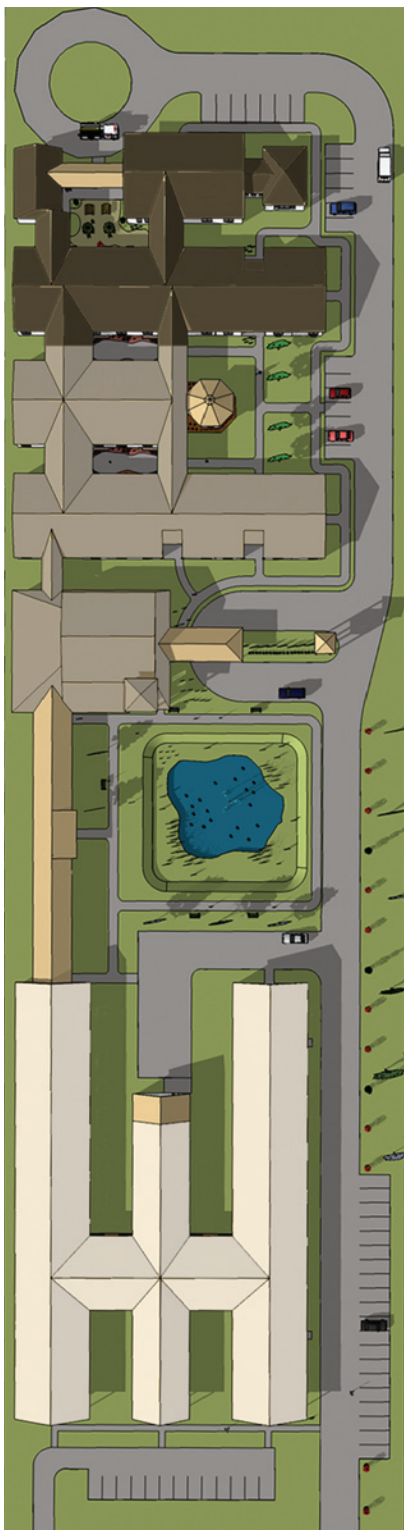
Healing Environments

A&M students propose solutions for expanding an assisting living facility



The studio exercise called for students to design an addition for an assisted living facility for senior citizens in La Porte. The assignment was their first for the Spring 2008 design studio in the master's program at Texas A&M University's Department of Architecture.

Their professor, Dr. Mardelle McCuskey Shepley, AIA, who also serves as director of A&M's Center for Health Systems & Design, had not planned for the course to emphasize healthcare architecture until Parsons Group, the owner of the La Porte facility, approached her with an idea. Parsons Group asked if her students might compete to design a new 40-unit residential facility that would about double the existing capacity. Shepley says the offer posed two opportunities she considered worthwhile. First, it would provide a community service; and second, it would allow her students to interact with a client.

In February, Shepley and 12 students traveled to La Porte for a tour and discussion with Parsons administrators about the programming requirements for two levels of care—a higher level for elderly residents suffering from Alzheimer's and a lower level for those who required some assistance but are allowed to leave the premises. Upon inspection of the site, they realized that the extremely linear tract, 966 feet deep but only 254 feet wide, would necessitate that the addition be placed behind the existing one-story facility. That would also require a new main entrance to service both the old and new phases of the complex, along with providing emergency vehicles direct access to the addition. The client had two other requests: that the addition be aesthetically compatible with the original Colonial-style facility and that all residents be provided contact with nature.

The students set to work in small teams. They had only two weeks to finalize their concepts before presenting to Parsons. Shepley provided guidance by pointing her students to research, an aspect of A&M's architectural pedagogy that stresses evidence-based design and requires students to justify their decisions. For example, research indicates that wide corridors enhance walking and therefore enhance good health. "We know other things, like providing opportunities for social interaction," Shepley says of research that instructs architects how to create better healing environments.

Ellen Kiel and Bradley Keene, working as a team, designed eight-foot-wide, double-loaded corridors with small seating areas and large windows set at intervals. (Their concept is shown at left, with the existing wing shown at the bottom in the lightest color. The Alzheimer's wing is in the darkest color at the top.) Their idea, according to Keene, was to break the monotony of a long hallway and "get away from the institutional feel," while also providing reference points to help residents orient themselves.

Janelle Parsons, director of marketing and resident services for Parsons Group, said the company has passed along the students' ideas to the Austin office of The Lawrence Group, the firm that has been commissioned to design the addition. (The firm will employ one of the other students, Claire Wren, as a summer intern during the project's schematic design phase.)

"We were pleased to see what a young generation of architects could come up with for our older generations living at Parsons House LaPorte," Parsons said, adding that some elements will be incorporated into the final scheme. "Elements we plan to include are enclosed porches with planter boxes, a covered driveway, and an internal courtyard for our dementia residents."

STEPHEN SHARPE

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Austin/San Antonio Rail Transit Good News

While reading the "All Aboard!" article in the March/April issue, I almost fell out of my chair as it described the Austin/San Antonio Rail Transit as being alive and active. That's stunning!

Years ago, a group of people from San Marcos and Austin promoted the use of the existing railway for an Austin/San Antonio commuter line. The idea was cursed. Everyone had a different reason to hate it. TxDot was adamantly opposed. Folks in Kyle didn't want anyone using their old station and even Union Pacific had some ominous conditions. At the time the new Austin airport was underway and San Antonio felt this might draw people from their airport.

Like many good ideas, it seemed like a dead horse and we wiped it from memory. So, maybe this is your Easter issue—lots of good news.

I wish Cap Metro success particularly in setting an example of how to transport people without the blessing of TxDot. I've given up on Houston's tax sink hole METRO, but have always imagined Houston and Texas as well-connected as Europe. I hope that *TA* pursues this in more detail. They need some encouragement.

Charles E. Burgess, FAIA
Houston

Dance Halls Are Texas Treasures

I was pleased to find "Texas Dance Halls Among Annual 'Most Endangered Historic Places'" in the March/April issue. Thank you for bringing attention to not only the newly designed and built environment but also to the plight of dance halls statewide and 12 additional places in Texas threatened by neglect, suburban encroachment, large-scale transportation projects, and population shifts from rural to urban areas.

We have the collective creativity to preserve Texas treasures today just as we have the wherewithal to design new buildings that will be worthy of preservation 50 years from now.

Libby Buuck, President of Preservation Texas
Bedford

CORRECTION

The article "Thirteen Texans Elevated as AIA Fellows" in the March/April issue misidentified the business associations for two of the architects. Barbara White Bryson, FAIA, is the associate vice president for facilities, engineering, and planning at Rice University. Michael John Smith, FAIA, is principal of MJS Lighting Consultants in Houston.

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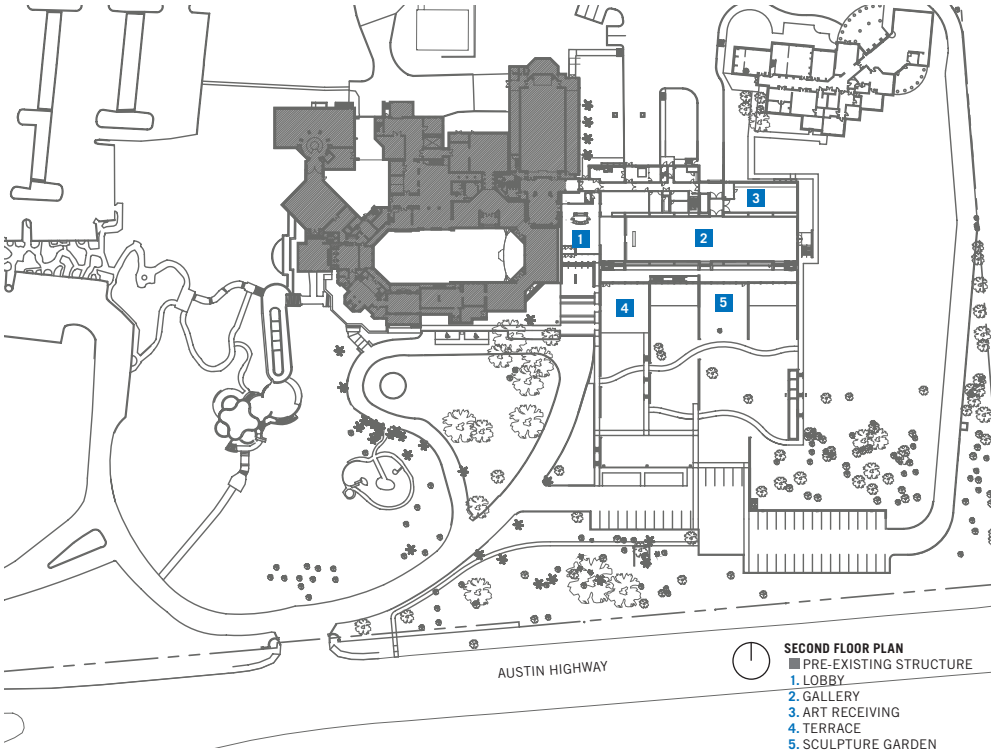

SAN ANTONIO Marion Koogler McNay, being the consummate modernist connoisseur of her time, surely would have been intrigued.

Her elegant 1929 Spanish Colonial Revival-style mansion is being upstaged by a crisply modern addition, the Jane and Arthur Stieren Center for Exhibitions. Designed by French architect Jean-Paul Viguier, the 45,000-sf glass pavilion is set to open June 7 with a week-long schedule of public events celebrating the latest expansion of the McNay Art Museum.

With its glazed south elevation inviting expansive views into its front gallery, the contrast between the new Stieren Center and the inward-focused original building could hardly be greater. Viguier designed the addition as a long and low-profiled two-story assemblage of rectangular exhibition spaces set deep into a grassy slope. A glass curtain wall spans the facade at the upper level, alternately opening out onto a terrace or plunging into a contoured sculpture garden one level below. Stone partitions aligned with the building's grid extend into the sculpture garden from the facade to delineate three outdoor "galleries."

"The museum's Spanish Colonial revival-style home was designed in the '20s to offer views of the inner courtyard and surrounding landscaped grounds," says William J. Chiego, director of the McNay. "Viguier immediately understood this Texas vernacular and the importance of the connection between the indoors and outdoors here."

To modulate the intense sunlight, the design team devised a sophisticated roof system that includes a fritted, glass-paneled ceiling specifically tuned for the building's solar orientation. Approximately seven feet thick, the roof system is topped with fixed louvers that channel daylight through a series of moveable horizontal shades installed above the silk-screened glass ceiling panels. Roof-overhang cantilevers above the south-facing facade, augmented by light-filtering shades, protect the interior galleries from direct sunlight.

"The French modernists of the '30s designed for tropical climates, inventing whole systems of metal cladding and movable walls. I was nourished on that," says Viguier, who has only one other building—the prism-shaped 32-story Sofitel Chicago Water Tower (1998)—in the U.S. to his credit. Although virtually unknown in this country, Viguier has designed several major projects in Paris, including the twin glass-skinned Coeur Défense skyscrapers in the city's high-rise commercial district of La Défense and the 35-acre André Citroën Park along the left bank of the Seine in the 14th arrondissement. The Viguier atelier is responsible for a number of large-scale public and private projects in France, as well as in Spain, Hungary, Malaysia, and China.

Ford Powell & Carson Architects and Planners in San Antonio serves as executive architect for the Stieren Center. The firm also expanded the museum in several increments between 1970 and 1982.

Marion Koogler McNay and her third husband, ophthalmologist Donald Taylor Atkinson, hired local architects Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayres to design their home on acreage called Sunset Hills. The historic core of the mansion is replete with coffered, stenciled ceilings, graceful archways, and fine embellishments that include ceramic tile from around the world and wrought-iron window grilles, gates,

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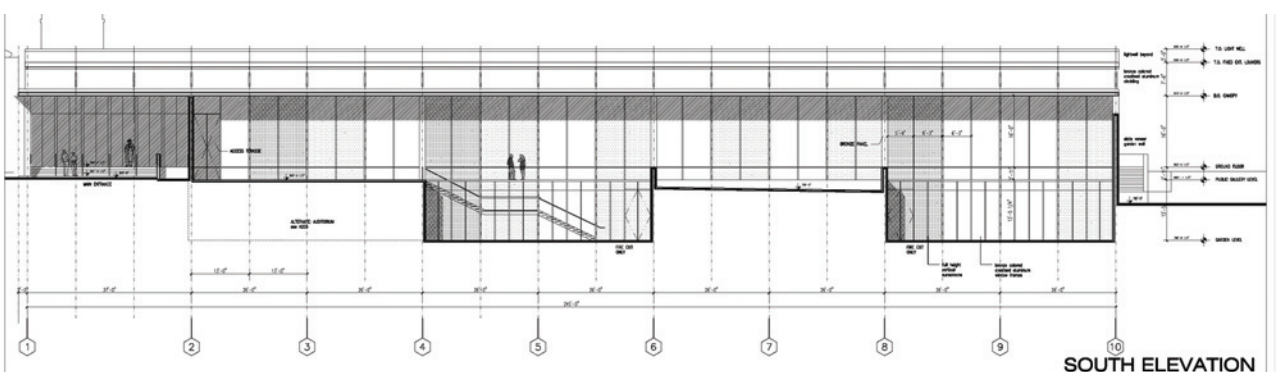

(top) The new Stieren Center connects with the original mansion on the 36-acre grounds of the McNay Art Museum. (left) Shaded by deep overhangs, the glass curtain wall along the south elevation opens to a contoured sculpture garden.

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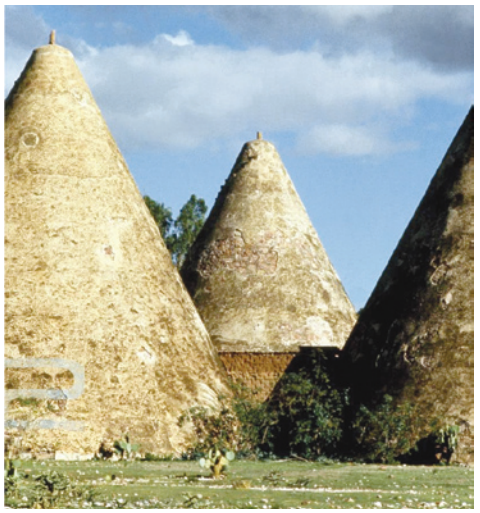

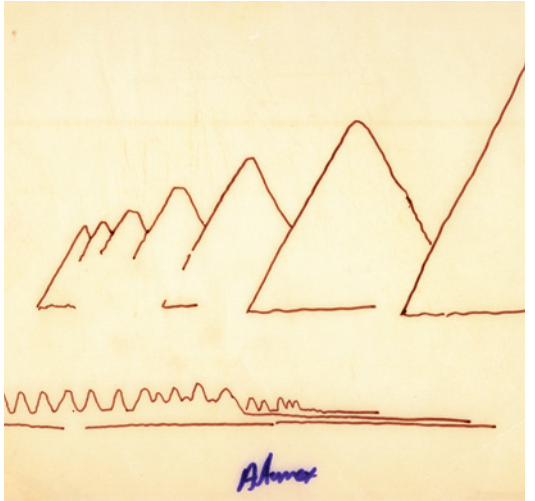

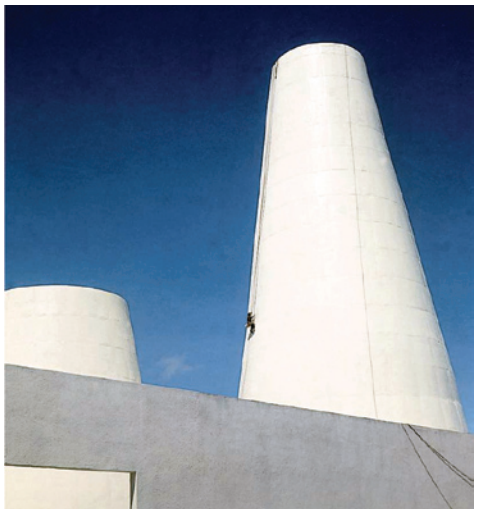

Legorreta Retrospective in San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO "The Architecture of Ricardo Legorreta," a recent exhibition at the Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, was both a significant event in the cultural life of San Antonio and an important insight into the noted architect's work process. The exhibit juxtaposed stunning photography of more than five decades of Legorreta's built work with design process sketches. These freehand sketches were particularly significant because they revealed aspects of the architect's conceptual agenda, working methodology, and schematic design and design development process, from initial conception through detailed design development. The exhibition, which closed on March 23, was curated by Bill FitzGibbons, the director of Blue Star, as part of the gallery's ongoing "Frozen Music" series on architecture.

Ricardo Legorreta Vilchis, born in Mexico City in 1931, graduated from the National Autonomous University of Mexico School of Architecture in 1953. He later established a close friendship with the world renowned Mexican architect Luis Barragán, whom he still refers to as "my teacher." Under Barragán's influence, he came to appreciate local, vernacular, wall-dominant architecture. Legorreta's work, however, developed quite distinctly in terms of program, scale, composition of plan and section, and even quantity of color used, and his architecture is a synthesis of his own vision and the ideas of others. Prime among these influences is Louis Kahn in terms of plan composition and his articulate precise cuts into walls that are simultaneously both ancient and modern. Legorreta went on to work for his former professor, the noted modernist architect and theorist José Villagrán García from 1955-1960, and became a partner in his firm. Soon after opening his own practice in 1960, Legorreta completed two breakthrough projects that brought him wide attention. These two buildings – the Automex Chrysler Factory in Toluca and the Camino Real Hotel in Mexico City – were prominently featured in the Blue Star exhibition.

The Automex Chrysler Factory (shown at top right), completed in 1964, was one of his earliest essays on place and the traditional Mexican courtyard/outdoor room, wall, and landscape, and was represented with schematic design process sketches and photographs. The project features an axial tree-lined entrance road that culminates in two cone-shaped forms, a water tower and an auditorium, that recall traditional grain silos from the region. (Legorreta developed these towers in collaboration with noted architect and artist Mathias Goeritz.) The entire complex is organized and experienced as a series of discrete, enclosed, walled courts reminiscent of the haciendas in central Mexico.

The Camino Real Hotel, completed in 1967 on a fast-track schedule for the 1968 Olympics, is a wall-dominant composition of colored plaster over sun-dried brick walls. The low-rise scheme is organized around a series of inward turning courts and gardens that create a refuge in the midst of the worlds' largest megalopolis. The entry court is particularly memorable, with its vividly colored screen walls and central fountain that splashes during the day and mists at night. Entering the lobby, one moves up steps that fuse modernist notions of abstraction and the continuity of space with memories of pre-Columbian stepped terraces and the wide stair landings of colonial convents and haciendas.

From the 1980s onwards, Legorreta became Mexico's most recognized architect and completed a number of international commissions. His design for the Metropolitan Cathedral (below) in Managua, Nicaragua, completed in 1993, provided a new congregational space for an earlier cathedral destroyed in an earthquake. An early sketch featured in the exhibit is an orthographic investigation in plan and elevation

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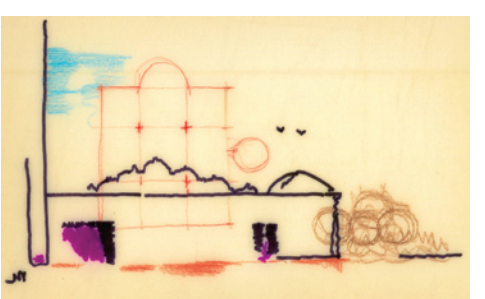

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The new owner plans to return the Settles Hotel to its former elegance, as shown in the postcard above. When first opened in 1930, the 15-story hotel was the tallest building between Fort Worth and El Paso.

PHOTO BY ANNE READ; POSTCARD IMAGE COURTESY SETTLES HOTEL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Big Spring's Historic Settles Hotel Seen as Future Mixed-Use Project

BIG SPRING The Settles Hotel, a prominent reminder of Big Spring's prosperity during the oil boom of the late 1920s, still towers over the downtown although abandoned for almost 30 years. Despite several failed attempts within recent years to revive the neglected landmark, the 15-story Neo-Classical/Moderne icon is again being studied for rehabilitation. This time by a native son who plans to convert the old hotel to commercial and residential mixed-use.

A community embarrassment because of its obvious vacant status and woeful disrepair, the once-elegant Settles was long ago stripped of its distinctive interior embellishments. Claimed by the city for back taxes, the building seemed marked for demolition until Brint Ryan bought it in 2006. Ryan, a Dallas-based accountant who grew up in Big Spring, formed the privately funded Settles Hotel Development Corporation to accomplish his goal of returning the luster to the property. Ryan and his brother, Kristopher, who is the corporation's general manager, hired Dallas architect Norman Alston for the rehabilitation project.

As might be expected with Depression-era construction, the greatest challenges Alston face are related to bringing the hotel up to code, including installation of a fire-sprinkler system without damaging decorative plaster ceilings, locating a second stairway in a building with 4,000-square-foot floor plates, and updating services to existing public spaces (including ballrooms and banquet halls "with almost no bathrooms, much less accessible ones," says Alston.) New amenities are expected to include a fitness center, a full-service restaurant, and a conference center. The tower's lower floors will be used again as hotel rooms, with the upper floors reconfigured as apartments.

The hotel's new owner is optimistic despite the fact that Big Spring's population has been declining and its local economy has never recovered from the closing of Webb Air Force Base in the late 1970s. The spoils of the oil boom of the late 1920s enabled W.R. Settles to purchase the downtown tract, retain architect David M. Castle of Abilene, and finance his optimistic hotel project. Built for the reported cost of $500,000, the hotel was the tallest building between El Paso and Fort Worth. Opening in October 1930 to great fanfare and support by the local community, the Settles hosted dignitaries and celebrities that included Elvis Presley, Lawrence Welk, Herbert Hoover, among others.

The Settles is being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places distinction, which if accepted will make the project eligible for federal tax credits. The new owners have tracked down the original marble flooring, wrought iron railings, doors, furnishings, dinner ware, and other historic artifacts marked with the hotel's emblem. Also, the local Heritage Museum has offered to return the lobby's opulent chandelier. Guided by Castle's original drawings, the owners plan to accurately restore the ballroom and lobby, along with the building's original neon roof-top and front-entrance signage.

The Ryan brothers have also purchased other nearby properties to directly support and/or complement their mixed-use development. Rehabilitation will begin this summer, with completion scheduled to coincide with the building's eightieth birthday in 2010.

LAWRENCE CONNOLLY, AIA

A *TA* contributing editor, the writer is principal of Connolly Architects & Consultants in Austin.

'Horizons' Program Introduces Girls To Future Professional Opportunities

DALLAS For the past eight years, AIA Dallas' Women in Architecture has reached out to girls in elementary and middle-school grades through a national program called Expanding Your Horizons. The program encourages girls to continue their studies in math and science by introducing them to interesting career options in technical subjects. The students participate in hands-on workshops of fun activities associated with various career fields such as architecture, forensic art, and electronics, among others. This year's event attracted a total of 78 girls (three from fifth grade, 25 sixth graders, 32 seventh graders, 17 eighth graders, and one ninth grader).

Women working in those fields give presentations and lead workshops that are designed to attract a wide range of participants, not just girls who already find math and science appealing. For the architecture portion of the event, the presenters spoke about their work environment and the range of options available in their architectural profession.

Women in Architecture of Dallas conducted its first Expanding Your Horizons program in February 2000 with presentations by Melinda Poss, AIA, and Carolyn Howard. This year's Women in Architecture involvement, facilitated by Penny Ball, was presented by three women from different areas of the architectural profession: Lennie Chamberlin explained her duties as a facilities design specialist with Dallas County Community College District; Maria Cadiloros with Terracon discussed investigations into property conditions, as well as her travels for work; and I described a typical day at Archiphy, the architecture firm where I work and where my routine client interaction often has a direct impact on design decisions.

This year, the workshop assignment consisted of designing a school, a gymnasium, or a library, with a site plan provided to scale. The site had a parking lot as well as roads and contours. The program called for the girls to place the building within the constraints of the site. The girls were given walls, doors, HVAC rooms, along with cutouts of furniture, restrooms, trees, etc. The sessions were like mini studios with input from us including discussions about how to place the building on site and making efficient layouts to reduce cost.

At first the girls looked puzzled about the process, but as we explained the program and what the symbols represented they got more involved; they asked many questions about their layouts and some were drawn to site development and landscaping. We discussed some construction details, such as how to construct a wall to keep moisture out and avoid mold as well as notions about the arch. They grasped the new information very quickly and got comfortable working in a team environment while designing interesting vignettes.

Girls from fifth to ninth grades learned about future career options, including the architectural profession, during the "Expand Your Horizons" program in Dallas.

PHOTO BY PENNY BALL

Overall, the experience was very rewarding. We noticed how the girls became interested in the design process, and we hope the activities will lead them to learn more or even choose architecture as their careers.

MARGINE BISWAS, AIA

Women in Architecture of Dallas meets the third Wednesday of each month at noon at the AIA Dallas office. For more information on Expanding Your Horizons, visit www.EYHnet.org.

Two Texas Communities Picked for SDAT

Two Texas communities are among 10 selected across the U.S. for study this year by an AIA Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) to help develop strategies for improving environmental conditions and preserving a sense of place while faced with suburban sprawl. Fort Worth and Leon Valley, a 3.5-square-mile swath of former ranchland in northwest San Antonio, have visits scheduled later this year by teams composed of volunteer architects, urban designers, planners, and other specialists. The SDAT program, organized by the AIA Center for Communities By Design, was inaugurated in 2005 and since then has selected an annual roster of cities and towns for team visits. This year marks the first time a Texas community has been included.

The SDAT program is similar to the AIA's Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program that has long served as a catalyst for community self-examination and planning of more livable places. While these two programs remain distinct, the contemporary emphasis on environmental issues affords the SDAT program an increasingly prominent position in AIA outreach and knowledge generation. According to David Downey, Assoc. AIA, former managing director of the AIA Center for Communities by Design, "The SDAT program [helps] communities address neighborhood revitalization, transportation infrastructure challenges, as well as offer sound strategies to improve air and water quality, and local economic development."

The two Texas communities requested SDAT expertise in resolving specific issues. Fort Worth's specified air and water quality, growth management, and economic revitalization. Leon Valley specified business development, housing type variety, and transportation facilities. "It was obvious that much had been invested and the stories in these two communities were compelling," said Erin Simmons, director of the Center for Communities by Design and a member of the selection committee.

The SDAT process begins with an orientation visit by the team leader who will meet with local leaders and stakeholders, and solicit research necessary for producing a preliminary report. The main event is the team visit, taking the form of a facilitated charrette lasting two to three days. The team applies its problem-seeking and problem-solving expertise within the context of community goals, generally or specifically put forward in the submittal. And in the pursuit of measurable outcome, the process reaches its conclusion through a meeting to discuss the team's final report. The team will follow up with a one-year assessment. The anticipated result of the charrette is a strategic plan for building a community more in harmony with the local and global environment.

JEFF POTTER, AIA

The writer is the principal of Jeff Potter Architects in Dallas.

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AIA Houston Awards 16 Projects

HOUSTON AIA Houston honored 16 projects during the chapter's fifty-second annual Design Awards Dinner held on March 27 at the Rice Hotel. Winners were selected from 117 entries.

The Design Awards' jury was conducted at the offices of AIA San Francisco on March 20. The jury members, all based in San Francisco, were Joshua Aidlin, AIA, of Aidlin Darlin Design; Anne Fougeron, AIA, of Fougeron Architecture; and Elizabeth Ranieri, AIA, of Kuth/ Ranieri Architects.

The jury chose to award just one level of awards and the projects are a wide cross section of work from a 141-sq. ft. press box to an unbuilt 545,000-sq. ft. high school. The projects also ranged from rural and rustic to technologically advanced.

Three projects were selected in the architecture category:

Round Pen, designed by Metalab and Joe Mashburn for Lyle Lovett in Klein, near Houston, was admired by the jury for the level of beautiful but simple detail. The building utilized computer-numerically-controlled laser cutting and digital modeling to create a kit of parts that was built on site by skilled craftsman with minimal tools and equipment.

St. John School's Scotty Caven Field Press Box, designed by mArchitects, breaks from the traditional architecture of the campus. The 141-net square foot building is expressive of the local materials used on the project. The operable windows and wrap-around wood screen promote cross ventilation, therefore no air conditioning is used. The jury admired the simplicity of this project, stating, "One little idea was executed very well to create a nice project with fine detail."

Rice University Data Center, designed by Carlos Jimenez Studio and PGAL, is a system of tilt-up concrete panels with an economical customized relief pattern. The project is painted a bright fluorescent green to emanate a geometric topiary while providing an ever-changing tonality of color and shadow.

In the residential category, the jury selected three projects:

SKYBOX: living on the edge, designed by Peter Jay Zweig, is a house for a young, newlywed couple living in Austin. The sloping site allowed for the skybox concept to emerge with an upper level, open-plan living area to be positioned to capture the breezes over a 16-foot cantilever and allowing an extraordinary view of the Austin skyline.

2526 Bellmeade, designed by Glassman Shoemake Maldonado, is a multi-generational family compound on the site of a childhood home. The compound consists of a house for grandmother, son, and family of five, with a guest apartment and communal gardens. The energy-efficient spaces are filled with natural light but shaded from the summer sun and materials from the original house were re-used.

Salazar House, designed by Stern and Bucek Architects, is located in a modest 1940s subdivision south of the University of Houston. The two-bedroom, 2,300-square foot house is the neighborhood's first new dwelling in nearly 15 years. Organized around a landscaped courtyard, the house is designed with wide overhanging eaves, operable windows, and one-room-deep spaces to aid in natural ventilation.

The jury selected the following three projects in the interiors category:

Northshore Dental, designed by Karen Lantz of Enter Architecture, resulted from the client's desire for a cutting-edge dentist office at Evanston Court. The site design includes an additional medical lease space, with buildings surrounding an outdoor courtyard containing a central garden that provides a focal point from the interior spaces. The project features durable materials from local sources.

Susman Godfrey, designed by Gensler, are offices for a law firm whose principals wanted to make much needed improvements to their existing space while creating a unique arrival sequence to project a progressive image. Gen-

Continued on page 18

Round Pen

St. John School's Scotty Caven Field Press Box

Rice University Data Center

SKYBOX: living on the edge

2526 Bellmeade

Salazar House

Because it's gas fireplaces made simple & with customizable surrounds. Here, in the home of Boston designer Frank Roop.

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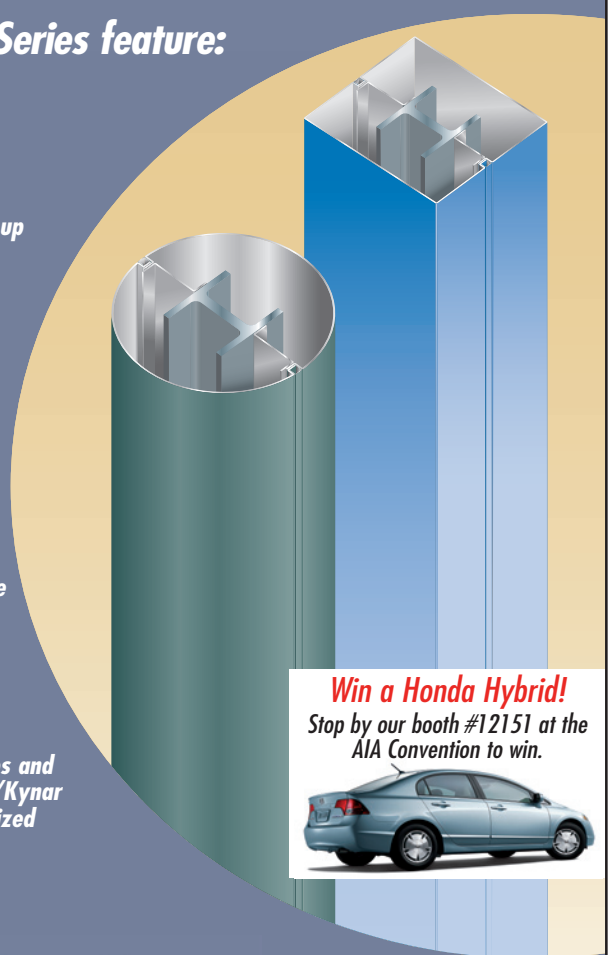

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NCARB MONOGRAPH SERIES

Continued from page 16

sler added new glass elements to extend the original theme, using LED lighting to accent the walls with color.

Schlumberger Limited Headquarters, by Planning Design Research Corporation, is designed for both people and museum-quality art. The manipulation of simple geometries is combined with the bold use of light, textures, and rhythms. The environmentally "green" space is warm, elegant, and inviting without looking recycled. The jury applauded the project's rational plan and its lighting design, giving credit to the architect for using restraint and allowing the art collection to stand out. "This is a very sophisticated interior," the jury commented, adding "Well done!"

In the restoration and renovation category, the jury awarded the following four projects:

Wharton County Courthouse by Bailey Architects has been noted by the Texas Historical Commission as the "most complex" restoration completed in the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The work of Bailey Architects was remarkable given the changes that happened to the courthouse over time, including the application of yellow stucco over the brick and limestone, and modifications such as a flat roof and dropped ceilings.

Burdette Keeland Design Exploration Center by GBA Architecture, rehabilitates a steel, wood, and metal-clad structure originally constructed during World War II and moved in 1947 to its current location at the University of Houston for use as an architectural design studio. GBA Architecture designed the articulated assemblage of materials and systems, including a cistern for rainwater collection, a sloped green roof, and abundant glazing for maximum daylight.

Southern Pacific Passenger Rail Depot by Stern and Bucek Architects addressed changes made over time to the Wharton depot. Listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings, the exterior and interior was renovated to house the Colorado Valley Transit Authority, the local bus service, and a train museum.

Museo Alameda Smithsonian by Jackson & Ryan Architects involved a renovation and an addition that nearly doubled the size of a building in San Antonio's El Mercado entertainment complex. The stainless steel screen façade, one of the project's most prominent design features, recalls the folk art of punched metal craftwork known as hojalata.

In the "on the boards" category, the jury selected the following three projects:

Arbor School, designed by Powers Brown Architecture, is planned as a facility for children suffering from severe maladies ranging from autism to total mobility impairment. The facility involves cross-disciplinary participation with physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and psychological services available on campus. The layout contains a garden wall that stimulates the five senses.

Heritage Plaza Parking Garage and Tunnel, Scheme One, designed by Morris Architects and planned for a prominent location in Houston, studies a possible envelope for a parking garage. The concept that developed is an economical and animated garage surface using a single module through variance and repetition.

Katy Independent School District High School, designed by Powers Brown Architecture, is envisioned to be a vertical campus with program elements expressed in pods where students will experience a social mixing lab. Powers Brown Architecture developed the school as a cross between high school and college.

KIMBERLY HICKSON, AIA

The writer chaired AIA Houston's design awards committee.

Wharton County Courthouse

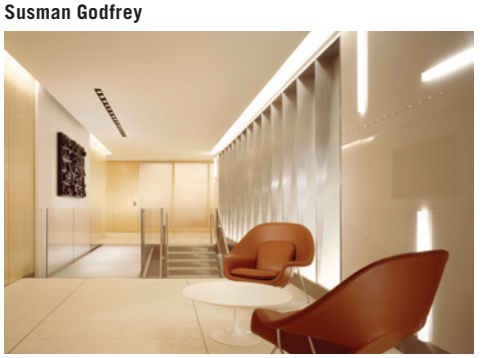
Southern Pacific Passenger Rail Depot

Burdette Keeland Design Exploration Center

Museo Alameda Smithsonian

Northshore Dental

Susman Godfrey



Schlumberger Limited Headquarters

Continued from page 11

that contains the seeds of ideas for the project. The cathedral is crowned by 63 domes that provide light and ventilation, with the highest dome located over the worshippers to emphasize the importance of the congregation. The multiple domes recall Spanish colonial buildings, such as the Capilla Real in Cholula, Puebla, that in turn recall the Moorish mosques at Cordoba, Spain.

Among Legorreta's most noted works in Texas, the San Antonio Central Library served as an impetus for the Blue Star exhibition. The building, completed in 1995, transformed the northern edge of downtown San Antonio and has been embraced by the general public. The wall-dominant architecture is saturated with color, and experienced in a carefully choreographed sequence of movement through the building organized around a light-filled interior court.

One of the most recent projects displayed in the exhibition, the Camino Real Hotel in Monterrey, Nuevo León, was completed in 2007. The multi-story tower block is organized around a vertical indoor courtyard that is filled with light, the vertical and horizontal movement though the building, and a number of the restaurants and other public spaces with accent colors that recall local vernacular architecture. One of the most striking aspects is a mezzanine restaurant that contains a walk-in wine cooler that is a discrete enclosure in which one may also dine. An outdoor swimming pool on an upper floor is enclosed by walls and is a statically calming space half shaded by a thick trellis and half open to the sky.

Viewed collectively at the Blue Star, the works conveyed the overall impression that Legorreta is a prolific, hard-working architect very much involved in the development of each project including details such as lighting and switching of electrical outlets and integrating furniture in each room. The exhibition was also an appropriate acknowledgement of a remarkably productive career, and the viewer was left with a sense of anticipation of what Legorreta will next produce with his son and partner, Victor Legorreta, and their firm's capable project team.

EDWARD R. BURIAN

The writer is an architect and associate professor at the UTSA Department of Architecture. He wrote and edited *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico* (University of Texas Press, 1997). His forthcoming book explores the undervalued architecture of Northern Mexico from 1821 to the present day.

Continued from page 9

and lanterns made in San Antonio. Four years after her death in 1950, the McNay opened as the first museum of modern art in Texas. Today the museum houses an impressive collection of works by 20th-century masters, including Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edward Hopper, Jackson Pollock, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Pablo Picasso.

The museum's permanent collection is so extensive that space limitations have long restricted many of the works from being displayed at the same time. The leadership of the McNay methodically set out in the 1990s to make improvements, first with a $7.6-million restoration and renovation of the mansion that was completed in 2001. Then a contentious decision was made to raze the San Antonio Art Institute, a 47,000-sf postmodern building designed by Moore Ruble Yudell and built in the 1988 on the McNay grounds adjacent to the mansion. Its demolition in 2003 freed up the land for construction of the Stieren Center, and later that same year the McNay announced the selection of Jean-Paul Viguier as design architect for the expansion. Also competing for the commission were Machado & Silvetti, Boston; the Polshek Partnership, New York; Carlos Jiménez, Houston; and Weiss Manfredi, New York.

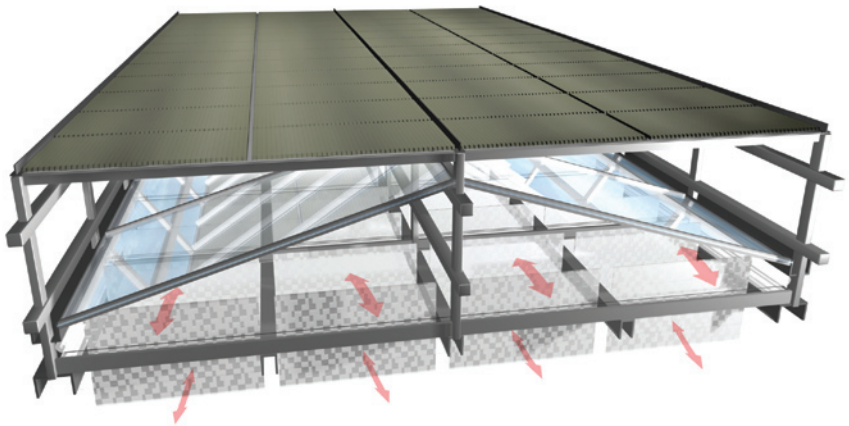
The inaugural exhibition scheduled for the Stieren Center, American Art Since 1945: In a New Light, will mark the first time the McNay has exhibited the full extent of its contemporary collection. Museum officials expect the natural light of the new galleries to accentuate the work, particularly Op Art and geometric abstraction. Also to be featured are recent painting acquisitions, including works by Willem de Kooning, Larry Poons, Dorothea Rockburne, and Alexander Liberman, as well as new sculpture acquisitions, including works by Raoul Hague, John Chamberlain, Kiki Smith, and Red Grooms.

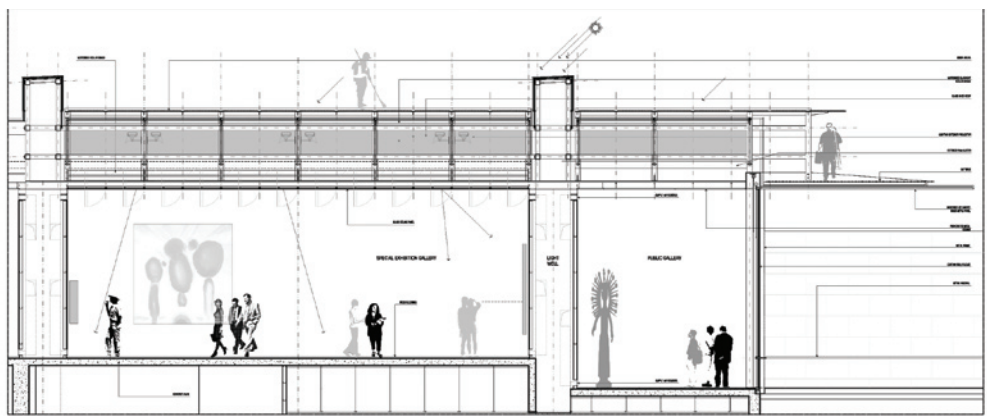
Visitors entering the new Jane and Arthur Stieren Center for Exhibitions will follow along a pathway and front landing of soft gray-green stone. The same stone frames the glass threshold and clads vertical elements inside the lobby, then reappears at junctures throughout the museum. To the right of the lobby, the Tobin Exhibition Galleries offers 7,500 sf of flexible space for the McNay to host larger traveling exhibitions for the first time. From the ground-floor galleries shallow stairways lead down into a long, dramatic barrel of a gallery running parallel to the glass facade. This sculpture gallery overlooks the whole of the new sculpture garden and opens onto an elevated terrace. A monumental perforated, bronzed metal staircase leads to the garden level where four more galleries and a 225-seat auditorium are located. In the sculpture garden, meandering pathways offer views of sculptures, gardens, and the McNay's buildings.

"It may seem strange that the leadership of the McNay turned to a European urbanist to expand its revivalist home, located on landscaped grounds in South Texas. But we were struck by the clarity and modernist simplicity of his approach," says Jane Stieren Lacy, emeritus trustee of the McNay, who, along with her late husband, Arthur, were the main benefactors for the expansion. "The design is a fitting homage to the vanguard spirit of the museum's founder, Marion Koogler McNay."

STEPHEN SHARPE

Sharpe is the editor of *Texas Architect*.





The design team devised a unique roof system to protect artwork from the South Texas sun, with fixed metal louvers at the top and moveable panes of fritted glass at the ceiling level that electronically adjust to light conditions.

RENDERINGS COURTESY JEAN-PAUL VIGUIER; PHOTO BY JEFF GOLDBERG/ESTO COURTESY MCNAY ART MUSEUM

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Go Green Expo in San Antonio

The Go Green Expo, set to take place at the Live Oak Civic Center in San Antonio, will feature the ZAP (Zero Air Pollution) car and Dr. Hazen Rashad-Alli of UTSA's College of Architecture. For more information, e-mail *rzheck@cs.com* or call (210) 212-8031. APRIL 4-5

Chinati Foundation Hosts Symposium

Twelve featured speakers will discuss the writings of the museum's founder, the late Donald Judd. Visit *www.chinati.org* or call (432) 729-4362 for more information. MAY 3-4

Echoes of Invention at Bayou Bend

Bayou Bend, the former house of Miss Ima Hogg (1882-1975), and today part of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, provides an elegant outdoor setting for the world premiere of Houston composer Brad Sayles' *Echoes of Invention* performed by the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra. Call (713) 665-2700 or visit *www.mfah.org/bayoubend*. MAY 4

Atomic Austin Heritage Homes Tour

The tour titled *Atomic Austin* will focus on mid-century modern architecture. The tour will highlight the residence of architect Charles Granger and a Westlake home equipped with a bomb shelter. For more information, visit *www.heritagesocietyaustin.org* or call (512) 474-5198. MAY 17

Environmental Graphic Designers in Austin

The Society for Environmental Graphic Design will meet in Austin to discusses the interplay of environmental graphic design and the forces that inspire creativity. Featured speakers include local architects and landscape architects. Access more information at *www.interplay-austin.com*. MAY 28-31

TSA Design Awards' Call For Entries

See article at top of this page. The Call for Entries is available at *texasarchitect.org*. Submittals due MAY 30

Designed by Architects Features Metalwork

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston presents *Designed by Architects: Metalwork from the Margo Grant Walsh Collection*, an exhibition of 800 objects designed by prominent architects. For more information, visit *www.mfah.org*. THRU AUG 3

TSA Honor Award Nominations

Instructions and forms for 2008 TSA Honor Awards are posted at *texasarchitect.org*. Nominations due JUNE 4

Jury Selected for 2008 Design Awards

AUSTIN The jury for the 2008 TSA Design Awards will be arts writer Judith Dupré and architects Steven Ehrlich, FAIA, and Billie Tsien, AIA. The three are scheduled to meet June 27 in Austin to review entries and make their selections. The deadline for entries is May 30.

Dupré's most recent work of illustrated nonfiction is *Monuments: America's History in Art and Memory* in which she examines the political, psychological, and emotional reasons behind the building of American memorials. She has written several other books, including *Skyscrapers* (Black Dog & Leventhal/ Workman, 1996); *Bridges* (Black Dog & Leventhal/Workman, 1997); and *Churches* (HarperCollins, 2001). Born in Providence, R.I., she received degrees in English and studio art from Brown University, and subsequently studied at the Open Atelier of Design and Architecture in Manhattan. A member of the editorial board of the architectural journal Faith & Form, she currently is studying at Yale University investigating the impact of time, memory, and ritual on architectural meaning. She lives with her family outside of New York City.

Ehrlich is the founding principal of Steven Ehrlich Architects in Culver City, Calif. Selected in 2003 as the California AIA Firm of the Year, the firm's current projects include the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and the School of Earth and Space Exploration, both for Arizona State University, the University of California at Irvine's Art Center, five residential towers in Taipei, and a house in Dubai. In 2007, the Palm Springs Art Museum curated a retrospective show, Multicultural Modernism. Early in his career he learned the significance of how architecture responds to culture and environment. Six years in Africa (including two years with the Peace Corps as their first architect in Marrakech, Morocco, and teaching at Ahmandu Bello University in Nigeria) taught Ehrlich the wisdom of indigenous architecture.

Tsien is a principal and co-founder of Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects in New York, N.Y. She received her undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from Yale in 1971 and her M. Arch. from UCLA in 1977. Among the firm's best known work is the Spiegel Pool House, Feinberg Hall at Princeton University, the Whitney Museum of American Art Downtown Branch in New York City, and the Neurosciences Institute in LaJolla, Calif. She has taught at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, Parsons, Yale, Harvard GSD, and UT Austin. Currently, the office is working on the Museum of Folk Art in New York City, and the Students Arts Center at Johns Hopkins University. Partners in architectural practice since 1986, Tsien and Willliams are married and have a 15-year-old son.

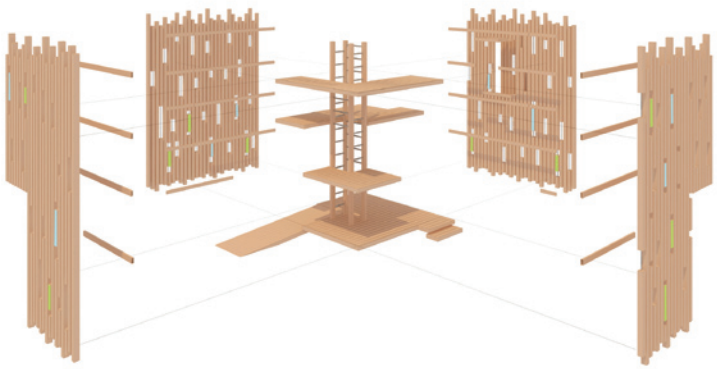
Lake/Flato Receives AIA Housing Award

WASHINGTON, DC Lake/Flato Architect's Lake Tahoe Residence is among 19 projects recognized in the 2008 AIA Housing Awards. The competition, now in its eighth year, was established to spotlight the best in housing design and promote the importance of good housing as a necessity of life, a sanctuary for the human spirit, and a valuable national resource.

The jury selected projects in four award categories—One/Two Family Custom Housing, Multifamily Housing, One/Two Family Production Housing, and Special Housing. The jury for the 2008 Housing Awards include: Jury chair Sanford Steinberg, AIA, of Steinberg Design Collaborative; David Jameson, FAIA, of David Jameson, Architect; Jane Kolleeny, special sections editor of *Architectural Record*; Charles F. McAfee, FAIA, of McAfee3 Architects; and Mark McInturff, FAIA, of McInturff Architects.

The Lake Tahoe Residence in Lake Tahoe, Nev., was recognized in the One and Two Family Custom Residences category. Designed as a weekend retreat, the modern structure reflects the local vernacular through its palette of rugged, low-maintenance materials including exposed concrete, weathered wood, and rusted Cor-Ten steel. Metal roofing retains a blanket of snowfall as insulation and wards off potential damage from wildfires.

"Fitting beautifully into the site," the jury commented, "this vacation home provides a multitude of comfortable living spaces in a compound of three buildings designed in a modern vernacular. This 'house compound' recalls earlier rustic 'camps' in the region, but is a thoroughly modern building. The relationship between exterior and interior is enhanced through the utilization of large rolling doors; the rigorous structure and refined detailing tie together the three buildings."

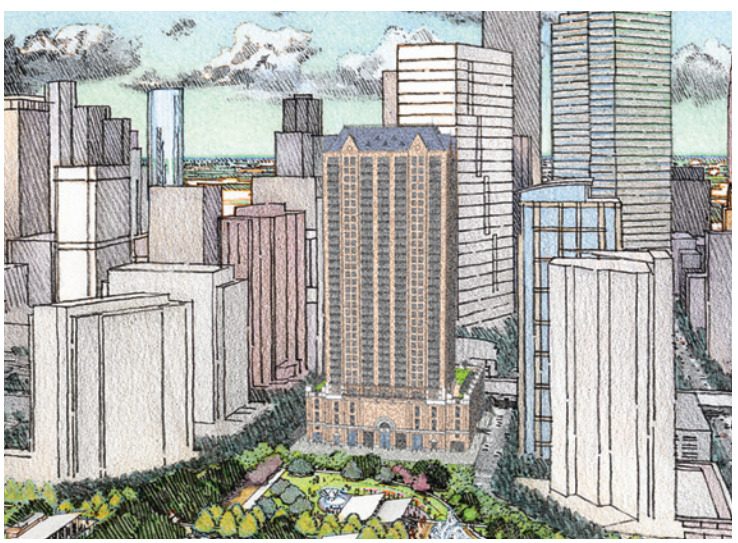


Four by 4

Nocturnal: Design Lab of Dallas describes its Four by 4 as a suburban tree house. It was selected by Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha's Botanical Center, as a winner in the 2008 KidStructure Competition. Four by 4 is intended to inspire creative play among the young and the young-at-heart. The exterior is composed of a series of 4x4-inch pressure-treated timbers of various lengths. Random openings exist on each facade to allow plenty of sunlight into the interior space of the playhouse. The strange shadows created within give the interior space a mysterious and exciting quality. The designers have encouraged people to interact with the walls of the structure by creating a series of brightly painted timbers that can be spun around. The interior consists of platforms at various heights that allow children to climb through the structure as if they were climbing a tree. Ramps, stairs, and ladders also are incorporated into the interior to encourage movement through the space.

One Park Place

Overlooking downtown Houston's new urban park, the 37-story One Park Place will offer 346 units with a total net rentable space of 498,000 square feet. Designed by Jackson & Ryan Architects for the Finger Companies, the residential tower will provide residents an escape from the chaos of city life. Levels two through seven will accommodate 793 parking spaces for residents and guests, and the eighth level will feature a 2,000-square-foot social terrace overlooking Discovery Green's 12 acres of 100-year-old oak trees, fountains, and outdoor sculpture. The social terrace will offer residents a bar and caterer's galley for entertainment, along with a state-of-the-art fitness center that faces the outdoor garden terrace and a two-tiered swimming pool. Each unit will include 10-foot-high ceilings and balconies with views of downtown. Plans also include 21,800 square feet of retail lease space in two sections at street level. Groundbreaking took place in 2007 and construction is scheduled for completion next year.



Beachtown

The new coastal development was designed by the planning and architectural firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk, noted master-planner of Florida's Seaside and Rosemary Beach communities. Beachtown, conceived along similar New Urbanist ideals, is a 260-acre Traditional Neighborhood Development on the east end of Galveston Island. Planned by owner Tofigh Shirazi as a network of small villages surrounding a central commercial district, the development will take advantage of its coastal setting with parklands, dune walkovers, and pedestrian passages linking the neighborhoods. Beachtown architecture will reflect coastal vernacular style reminiscent of historic Galveston. Nationally recognized architects who specialize in New Urbanism will design the residences. Among them is an "idea house" sponsored by *Coastal Living* magazine and designed by Michael G. Imber, FAIA, of San Antonio. The 4,000-square-foot home will be featured in *Coastal Living's* November 2008 edition.

The Designer's 'Hand'

On exhibit in Houston, metalwork by architects illustrate an often missing element

By GARRETT FINNEY

In this high-tech age of ours, designers are discovering new and better ways to work with their heads. And they use their feet to march inexorably forward, constructing buildings and cities that transform the landscape. However, an exhibition now on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, reminds us that designers have lost their "hand."

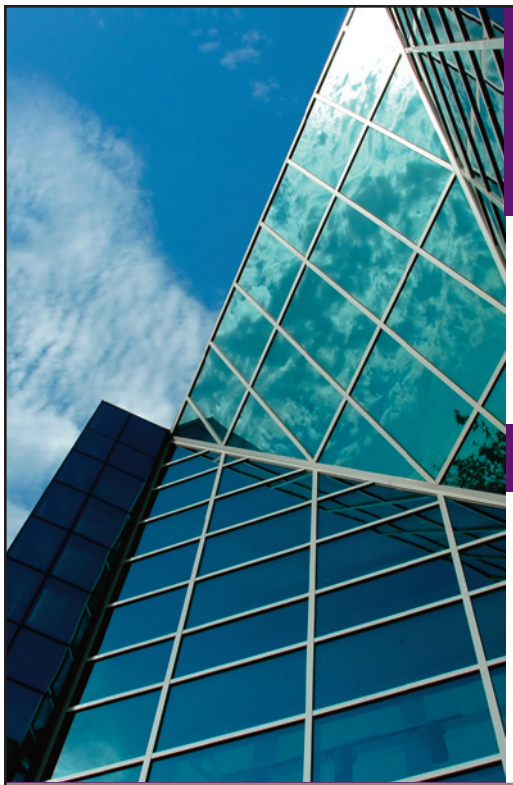
Designed by Architects: Metalwork from the Margo Grant Walsh Collection is a fine, taut show that is small enough to give viewers an intimate connection to the pieces on display, yet big enough to reward repeat visits. (The exhibit continues at MFAH through June 15.) Walsh, a former principal of Gensler's Houston office, has been collecting useful decorative objects for 30-odd years with a primary focus on silver objects of the late nineteenth century to the present day. As selected by MFAH curator Cindi Strauss, the items from Walsh's collection underscore the missing element – the "hand" – in today's technology-oriented marketplace.

While CAD and BIM give designers prostheses with which to create and produce, such tools allow exciting new methods and forms, and they streamline all phases of design and construction, a connection is missing today between the fundamental conception of a thing and its ultimate use. The objects on display don't scream out "Architect!" Instead, their simple beauty conveys the request that they be put to use. For instance, Josef Hoffman' centerpiece (1920?) mutely asks to hold flowers and William Spratling's coffee pot (c. 1962-64) beckons to be grasped without threatening to burn one's hand.

The works in the show from the British Arts and Crafts movement arose explicitly in reaction to the Industrial Revolution because of the designers' fear of losing an integrated sense of design and execution—that is, the "hand." Later objects in the exhibit show the "hand" less explicitly but demonstrate that beauty is not separate from craft and utility. The collector's hand is just fine.

Garrett Finney is an architect and furniture designer in Houston.

(clockwise from top left) Serving Pieces from the Diamond Pattern (1958) by Gio Ponti; Mantel Clock (1895) by Charles Francis Annesley Voysey; Brooch (1940-44) by William Spratling; Courtney Candlesticks (1989) by Charles Gwathmey and Robert Siegel; Mantle Clock (1904) by Charles Robert Ashbee; Four Teaspoons (1905) Charles Rennie Mackintosh; Coffee Pot (1962-64) by William Spratling; Centerpiece (1920-1932) by Josef Hoffmann.



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Members of the 2008 jury will be arts writer Judith Dupré of New York City, Steven Ehrlich, FAIA, of Steven Ehrlich Architects in Culver City, Calif., and Billie Tsien, AIA, of Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects in New York City.

Architects and clients of winning projects will be honored at the TSA Convention in Fort Worth, Oct. 23-25, 2008, and will be featured in the September/October 2008 edition of *Texas Architect*.

Entries must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 30, 2008

Texas Society of Architects
Attention: TSA Design Awards
816 Congress Ave., Suite 970
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2007 award winner Farley Studio by MJ Neal Architects; photo by Viviane Vives.

MAY 30TH DEADLINE

Mosque Design

With few prescribed elements, Muslims in Texas stress spirituality over aesthetics

By AKEL ISMAIL KAHERA, PH.D.

Over the last five decades more than 100 mosques have been established in Texas to serve the estimated 150,000 Muslims living mostly in its largest cities. The urban mosque, also known as an Islamic center, represents the heart of the Muslim community and provides the most visual expression of Muslim religious identity. The mosque (*masjid* in Arabic) is where the faithful gather to engage in communal worship, spiritual retreat, matrimony, education, and social activities.

The key challenge for an architect commissioned to design a mosque is how to interpret the broad range of aesthetic, liturgical requirements, and site-planning considerations. In other words, how does the architect deal with this particular building type to arrive at a synthesis of recurrent elements such as a minaret, a dome, or a *mihrab* (the niche in an interior wall indicating the direction toward Mecca)?

The Islamic Cultural Center of Austin was designed by Integrated Metropolis Architects in 2000 but never built. As planned, the Austin project included an open-air courtyard just inside the entry portal and a large fellowship hall.

Because Islam is often imbedded in a transnational identity the collective activity of worship treats the mosque as a reflection of the diaspora community, yet the belief system cannot be ignored and as such the type of aesthetics that we find in Texas mosques span a range of cultural nuances – modern, traditional, or hybrid – that have power over the image of the edifice. To clarify the problem it is important to realize that both architect and client face two related design choices. First, an approach that attempts to interpret and to bring critical analysis to bear on space, form, symbol, and order. This first approach makes it possible to avoid an aesthetic anomaly. Secondly, because the mosque is a building type endowed with a 1,500-year history it may be very difficult for any client or architect to suspend the temptation to randomly borrow ideas from the corpus of examples that exist throughout the Muslim world.

Further complicating the search for resolution to these two design issues, many communities lack decisive power over cultural style and imagery largely because of the inability to reach consensus. The literature on this topic is now more frequently available as a resource but key questions remain for the architect: How to interpret the specific symbolic and aesthetic associations for the Texas and the larger American context, and is it at all possible to conceive of an American mosque as an authentic representation?

Authenticity means that the architecture of the mosque has a two-fold space conception—spiritual (epistemological) and physical (aesthetic). These are fundamental areas of concern that an architect will have to decipher. Most important is the fellowship hall where men and women gather to worship on a daily basis, read the Qur'an, and engage in a host of pious activities.

A mosque is primarily a place of spiritual repose, thus as a spiritual sanctuary it is very important to the faithful. But mosques are not built according to divine patterns. (The two main religious texts for Muslims – the Qur'an and the Hadith – provide no clear rules as to what a mosque should look like, although the Qur'an does stress the value of the edifice as a place for the remembrance of God and the Hadith prescribes a list of profane actions that are not allowed to take place in a mosque.) The fundamental criteria is the plan of a mosque's fellowship hall, which is primarily governed by the liturgical axis towards Makkah [Mecca]. The indication of this axis is a niche (*mihrab*) in the wall facing Makkah. Texas mosques display a wide variety of styles based on this broad interpretation of aesthetic vocabulary and the need to meet the liturgical requirements.

Historically, three kinds of visual patterns have evolved in Muslim sacred art: 1) designs derived from plant life, often called arabesque in the West; 2) Arabic calligraphy, which is the most revered art form in Islam because it literally conveys the word of God; and 3) tessellation, or the repetitive "ordering" of a geometric pattern. However, these three are not common to mosques in Texas because skilled craftsmen are not readily available to perform this type of work. Of particular importance to the aesthetics of the Texas mosque is the realm of meaning; in other words, the characteristic of sign and symbol. One can describe the process and properties and elements employed in the characteristics of spatial treatments, but at the level of construction we find an exhaustive category of types and subtypes.

Finding an appropriate design language for Texas is one of the key problems an architect must resolve. While the potential categories of styles are exhaustive, in its simplest function the mosque is a space for contemplation, repose, and communal worship. Even in Texas, this formula holds true as long as the principles of belief, order, space, and form can be perceived as a synthesis of composition and the production of space.

Akel Ismail Kahera, Ph.D., is a professor of architecture and community development at Prairie View A&M University and director of the Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture. He is also the author of *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender and Aesthetics* (University of Texas Press, 2002).

IMAGE COURTESY THE AUTHOR

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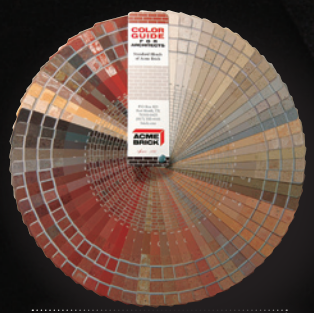

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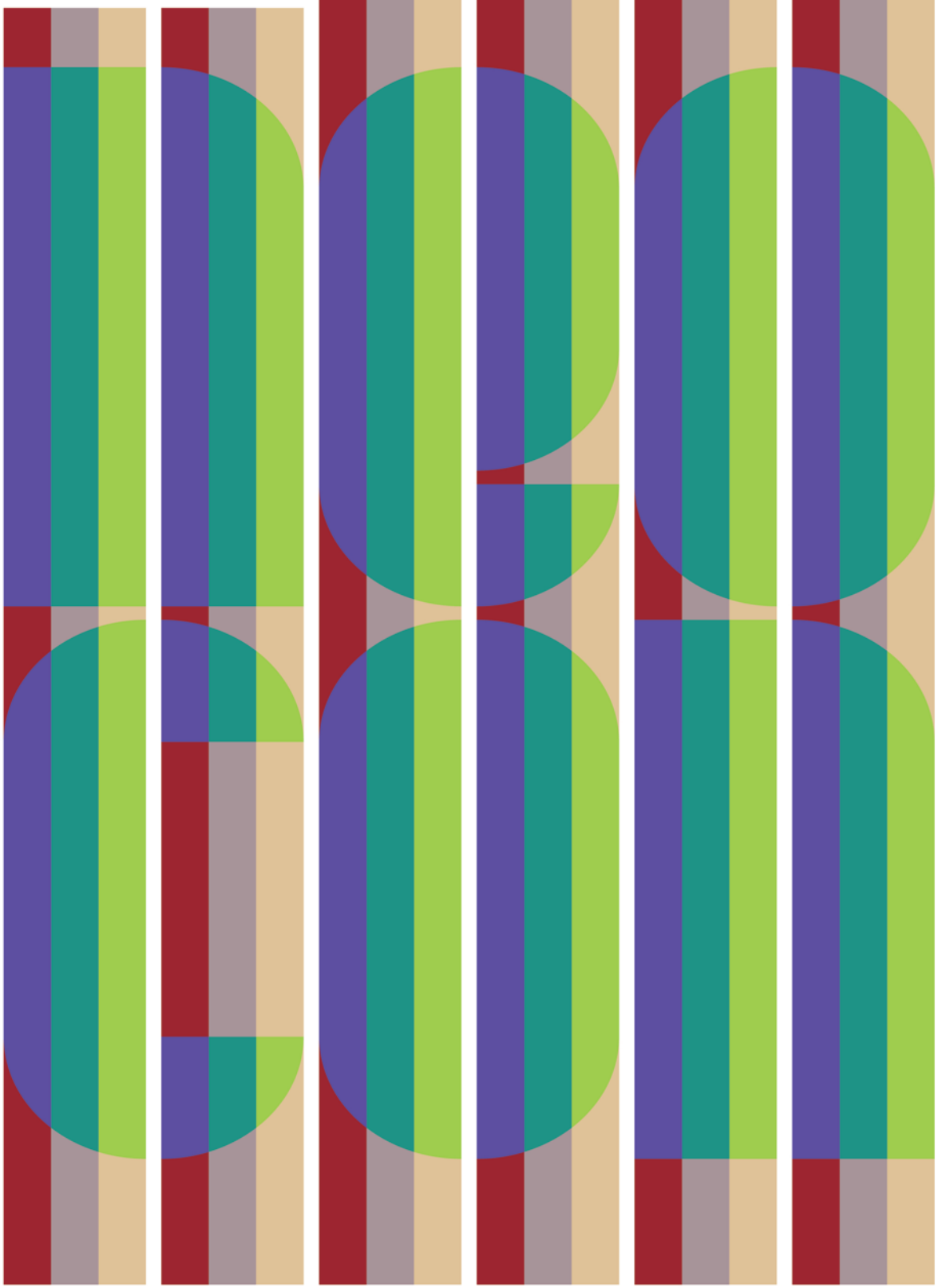

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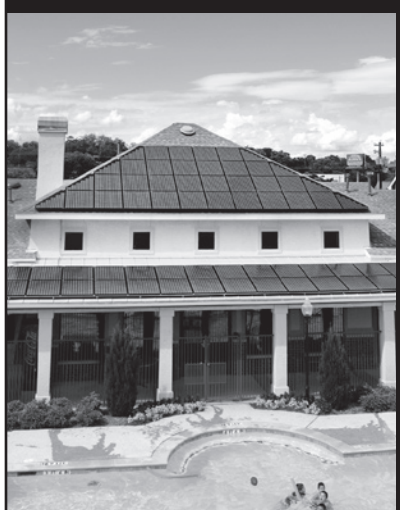

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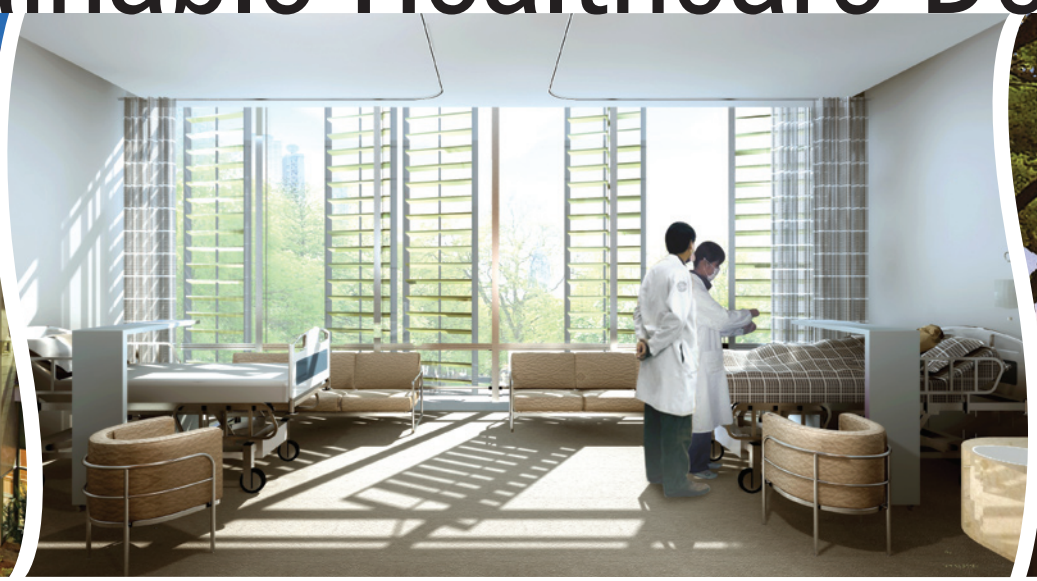
Sustainable Healthcare Design



Gail Vittori is co-author of Sustainable Healthcare Architecture *(Wiley Press, 2008) with Robin Guenther, FAIA. As co-director of the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems, Vittori also helped develop the* Green Guide for Health Care *(*www.gghc.org*) and chairs the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Healthcare Committee. TA Editor Stephen Sharpe recently interviewed Vittori about her book and her purpose in writing it.*

Why write this book at this particular time?

Healthcare holds a pivotal role in the civic realm. The U.S. healthcare sector represents about 17 percent of the gross national product; in 2007, there was more than 100 million square feet of healthcare-related construction activity representing about $23.7 billion. However, as green building has taken a front seat within the commercial office and residential sectors, healthcare has been a slower adopter. Our book is an effort to reconnect the healthcare sector with the intrinsic links between sustainable architecture and healthcare's mission of health and healing, and to profile the burgeoning activity in the U.S. and internationally that represents a template for 21st-century healthcare design.

How do you define 'sustainable' in terms of healthcare design?

For our earlier work on the *Green Guide for Health Care*, we developed the phrase "high performance healing environments" as a way to convey the breadth and depth of sustainability in the context of healthcare facilities. While "high performance" speaks to building operations, addressing quantified performance metrics such as energy and water use, "healing environments" introduces the significant attribute of healthcare facilities as places for healing—for the patients to heal, for staff to deliver healing services, for the building to contribute to ecological healing on the site, community, and global scales. So the framing of health and healing extends from the facility and what happens inside the walls to the much broader scope. When one thinks of healthcare facilities, it is often as places to take care of sick people. Think, instead, how healthcare facilities could evolve to serve the more pivotal civic role of promoting health and healing. There is an intrinsic humanism in healthcare facilities and we want to honor and celebrate that.

In terms of sustainable design, how does healthcare differ from other institutional typologies?

One reason why healthcare has lagged behind other sectors in terms of integrating sustainable design materials and methods is that it is highly regulated—some say over-regulated. There are legitimate concerns about infection control and protection of immunocompromised patients. Healthcare is also distinguished from other sectors in terms of energy intensity—it is the second most intensive building type, with more than two times the energy use per square foot than commercial office buildings, so it has a major role to play in addressing climate change. In terms

(far left) Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin is featured on pages 34-37. (left and below) RMJM Hillier's design for Alexandra Hospital at Yishun in Singapore, scheduled to open in 2009, reduces energy costs significantly through use of shading devices, green roofs and walls, cross ventilation, and a high-performance exterior envelope. (far right) Providence Newberg Medical Center near Portland, Ore., designed by Mahlum Architects, achieved LEED gold certification following its 2006 completion.

of healing environments, it is clear that the health benefits that have been linked to access to views and daylight are enormously beneficial to patients and staff. In a way, it is hard to justify, based on what we understand today, how our society can allow healthcare facilities to be designed without ensuring that views of nature and daylight are accessible to patients and staff.

How far has healthcare design come in terms of sustainability?

When I started work in the healthcare sector in 2000, I literally was unable to find a single reference to green or sustainable healthcare in the U.S. using Internet search engines. A lot has happened in a short period of time. For example, beginning in 2002, the *Green Guide for Health Care*, a project of Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems and Practice Greenhealth, developed a voluntary, self-certifying best practices toolkit to introduce green building design, construction, and operational strategies to the healthcare sector, based on the US Green Building Council's LEED framework, with the USGBC's permission. Today, the *Green Guide* has more than 17,000 Web site registrants, representing every state in the U.S., every Canadian province, and more than 80 countries internationally. In addition, there are more than 130 Green Guide-registered projects, representing more than 35 million square feet, and more than 20 LEED-certified healthcare facilities – including Providence Newberg Medical Center in Newberg, Ore., which achieved LEED Gold – and more than 130 LEED-registered healthcare facilities. As the stakeholders of healthcare facilities better understand the relationship between green building, health and healing, and the corresponding economic benefits, sustainable healthcare architecture is destined to be embraced and adopted as standard practice. No one will be able not to go down that road.

How effective are rating systems such as LEED in promoting sustainable healthcare design?

LEED for Healthcare is in development now. As with other LEED rating systems, LEED for Healthcare will provide a template for strategies that together address the opportunities to elevate the environmental and health performance of the built environment. LEED provides a common language for building designers, users, and the community to create a shared vision of what is possible and then to collectively gauge progress through design, construction, and operations. We have already seen widespread adoption of LEED in other building sectors. The *Green Guide for Health Care* has been a point of entry for healthcare specialits interested in learning more about green building practices as they apply specifically to this complex environment, and especially as they relate to healthier indoor environments and reduced cost and environmental footprints associated with energy use and water efficiency. Imagine the next generation of healthcare facilities that are connected to nature, offer abundant views and natural daylight, are built with non-toxic materials, and make people feel good.

A World of Small Wonders

PROJECT Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, Austin
CLIENT Seton Family of Hospitals
ARCHITECT Karlsberger
DESIGN TEAM Joseph F. Kuspan, AIA; Stephen T. Zilles, AIA; Kenneth C. Redman, AIA; Stephen G. Bennett, AIA; Daniel J. Clements III; Nicolas Banks; Paul J. Carney
CONTRACTOR White Construction Company
CONSULTANTS Bury & Partners (civil); ccrd partners (mechanical and electrical); Datum Engineers (structural); Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems (LEED); TBG Partners (landscape)
PHOTOGRAPHERS John Durant; Thomas McConnell

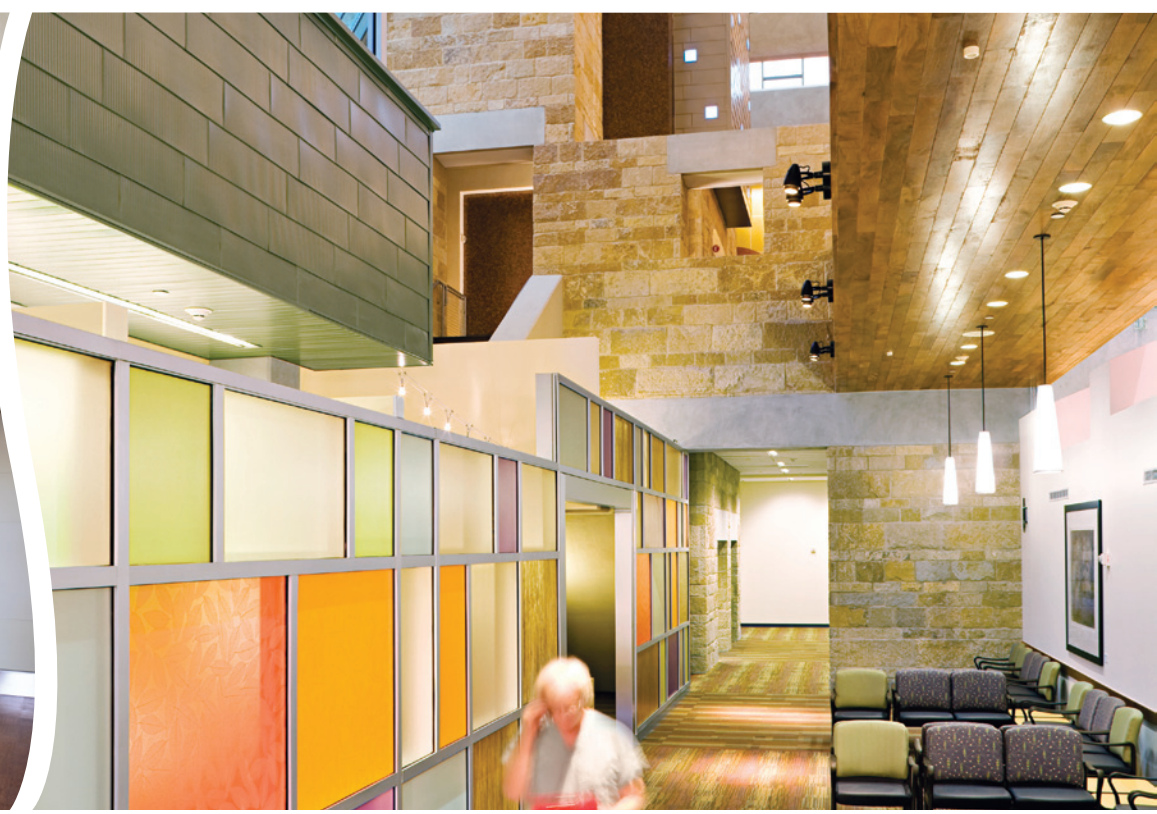
by THOMAS HAYNE UPCHURCH, AIA

HEALTHCARE ARCHITECTURE HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES over the past 20 years to provide environments that are more sensitive to the needs of patients, families, physicians, and staff. There is a greater understanding that wellness and healing are supported not only by advances in medicine and technologies in diagnostics and treatment, but also by the quality of the building's environment. Designed for the Seton Healthcare Network by Karlsberger of Columbus, Ohio, the Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas in Austin builds on these improvements to the healthcare environment and takes its design to an even higher level while also achieving ambitious goals for environmental stewardship.

Opened last summer, Dell Children's is a 473,000-sf, 169-bed facility dedicated to serving children in a 46-county area around Austin. Although designed to make a strong statement as a place for healing, much attention is being given to the project's goals to achieve LEED platinum certification. The focus on sustainable design was established by Seton at the onset of the project. At the recommendation of Karlsberger, a sustainable design facilitator was hired to lead a two-day charrette to outline sustainable goals. Attending were representatives of Seton's administration and network facilities offices, the entire design team, the construction manager, and experts in sustainable design, including Gail Vittori, co-director of the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems in Austin. The sustainable design team meetings were held regularly through the design phases and then quarterly through the life of the project to track LEED goals and progress. While final certification is not expected to be confirmed until the fall, the commitment of Seton and the entire design team towards environmental stewardship is clear and commendable.

The Dell Children's campus is constructed on 32 acres in the northwest area of the 722-acre brownfield site previously home to Robert Mueller Municipal Airport. The overall site is being redeveloped into a mixed-use "community," with the medical center campus being one of the early completed components. The campus also includes a medical office building, parking facilities, and a Ronald McDonald House. (The McDonald project, part of a national network of residential facilities for families with children undergoing hospital treatment, is registered for potential LEED platinum certification. Echols & Associates AIA of Austin designed the project for the charitable organization funded by the restaurant chain.)

The sustainable strategies of Dell Children's balanced a variety of methods to re-use, recycle, and conserve. Parking lot base and building backfill used 47,000 tons of recycled airport runway asphalt and base material. The construction project waste management program sent more than



4,000 tons of construction debris to recycling facilities in Central Texas and diverted 34,000 tons from landfills. Sustainable building materials and products include high-performance window systems, concrete with 30-percent fly ash in lieu of Portland cement, compressed wheat board in millwork, and low-VOC solvents, adhesives and paints. As part of the strategy for attaining a high LEED rating, materials were required to be procured within a 500-mile radius of the site.

Using sustainable materials was not always the most economical solution, but was the most sensitive to greater environmental concerns. For example, red sandstone quarried in West Texas was incorporated in the design to reflect its use on historic Central Texas courthouses. A similar sandstone was available from a quarry in Arizona for less cost, but use of that stone was not consistent with the sustainable goals. The facility also achieves a 35-percent reduction in potable water by reclaiming water for landscape irrigation, xeriscaping, and installing low-flow plumbing fixtures.

The most sophisticated sustainable design feature of the campus relates to energy production and usage. Seton teamed with the City of Austin and its electrical utility to construct an on-site Combined Heating Power (CHP) plant with a 4.5 megawatt, gas-fired turbine that generates 100 percent of Dell Children's electrical power. That not only removes the facility from the city's power grid, but the campus CHP plant achieves 75-percent efficiency in energy delivery (compared to a typical 30-percent efficiency via the electrical grid). In the event of its failure, two independent substations can provide full backup from the city's power grid, and a 1.5-megawatt "black start" diesel generator is installed on the campus for the medical center's life safety and critical branch systems.

The opportunity to develop a new children's hospital was significant for Seton. Previously known as the Children's Hospital of Austin and housed within Brackenridge Hospital near downtown Austin, the new facility could set itself apart from the larger and more "institutional" hospital with a different aesthetic and address. That new address – being at the old airport, about five miles northeast of downtown – required a highly visible landmark feature for the campus to be seen from nearby Interstate 35 and the surrounding neighborhoods. A 145-foot-tall "wayfinding tower" was designed to do just that, using colored glass panels with limestone veneer wrapping a steel frame and crowned by a white canopy symbolically referencing the traditional cornettes worn by Seton's founders, the Daughters of Charity. While the tower is indeed conspicuous, finding the entrance as one approaches the campus is not easy until the front of the hospital comes into full view. This may improve as the adjacent sites are developed.

In marked contrast, the facility's design provides clear interior orientation and wayfinding for visitors. Primary "streets" use natural materials, such as local limestone and red sandstone, combined with aluminum panels to establish a hierarchy of paths and zones. A "bridge" of mesquite planks separates areas of highest public traffic from clinical areas. Orientation is further enhanced through floor openings between levels and the integration of interior courtyards, visible from corridors and rooms at all four building levels. Storefront and stone veneer walls punctuated by window openings allow sunlit views to nature even from the heart of the building. The use of natural light, views to the gardens outside, and controlled access to the outdoors are evidence of a consistent design priority aligned with health and wellness.

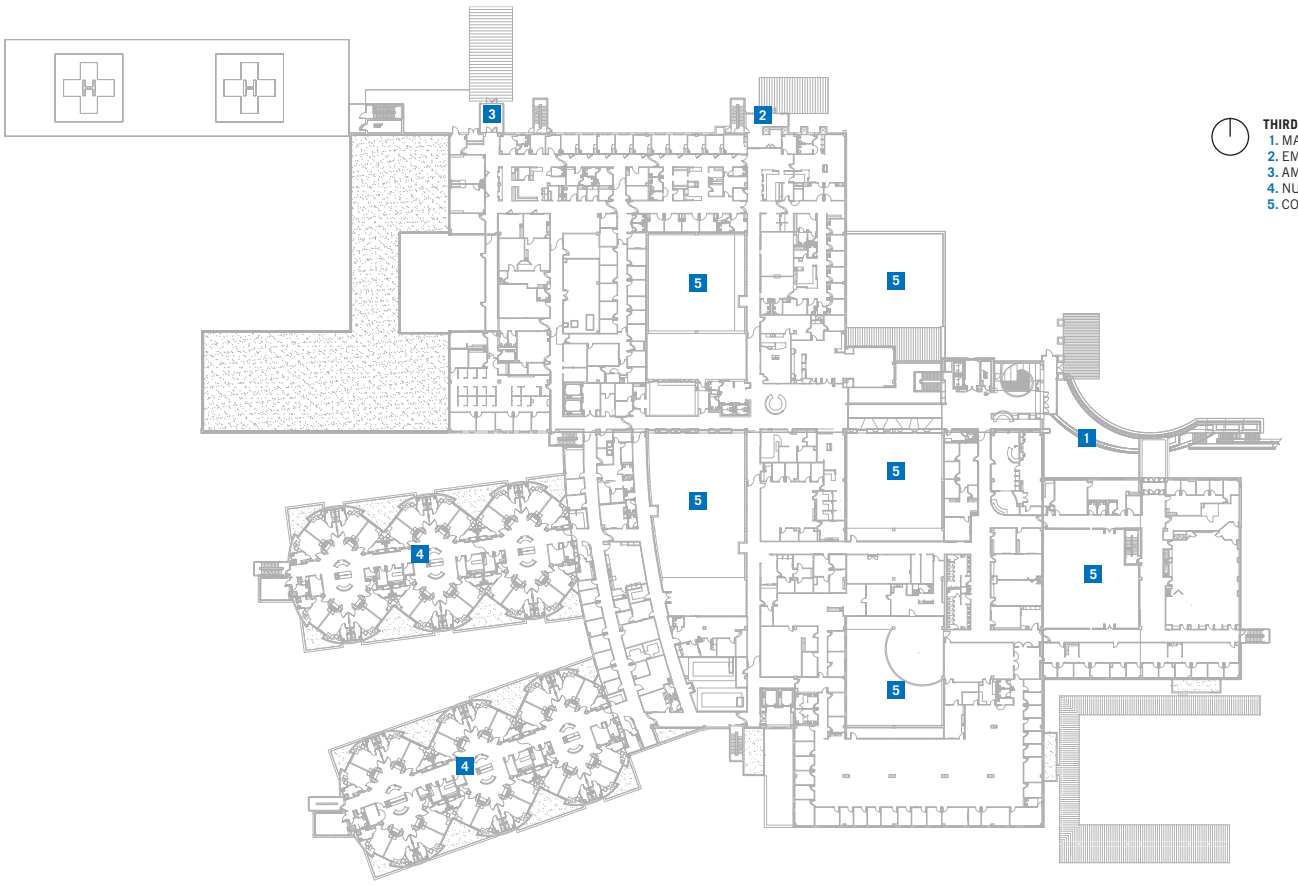
The six courtyard environments were designed by TBG Partners in Austin to signify the six eco-regions of Central Texas that correspond to the 46 counties serviced. In addition to the courtyards, TBG Partners designed a three-acre "healing garden" that wraps around the nursing units on the west side. This space provides pleasant outdoor views from the patient rooms as well as playful features such as a "floating stone" fountain, butterfly garden, labyrinth, sundial, reflecting pool, and open-air movie plaza.

Seton's commitment to improving the quality of indoor and outdoor spaces through original artwork is another key ingredient to the success of the project. Installed throughout the facility, art is to be seen, sometimes heard and touched, and always celebrating life. While many times playful, colorful and imaginative, the art appeals to everyone and does not limit itself to being cute or age-specific.The artwork contributes to creating a healthy place for all who stay, visit, or work there.

Overall, the extensive use of natural light, views and access to outdoor spaces, layering of rich colors and materials native to Texas, and integration of original art create an engaging, life-affirming place for children and their families—a world of small wonders, inside and out. Perhaps overly stimulating at times, the layers of materials and bright colors may just be the right ingredients that keep the public areas from becoming too quiet or serene when more animation and life are needed.

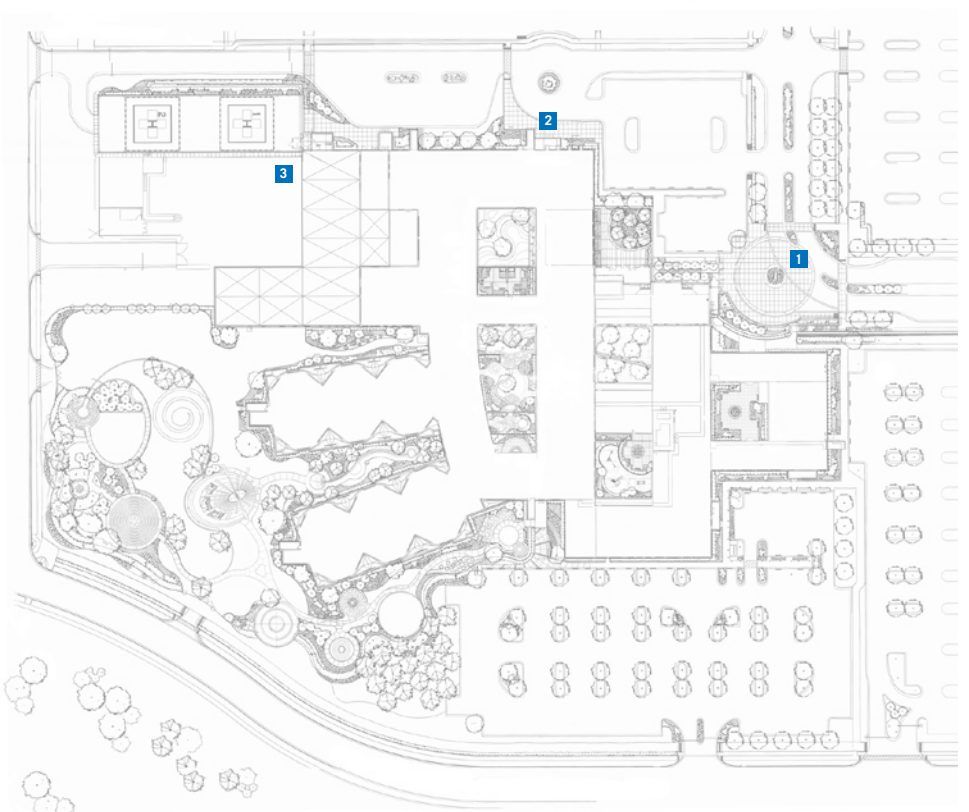
The real success of the project – greater than achieving remarkable goals for sustainability or setting a noteworthy example for advancing healthcare architecture – is in providing the best possible environment for the care of children.

The writer is principal of Upchurch Architects in Brenham.



THIRD FLOOR (ENTRY LEVEL) PLAN
1. MAIN ENTRANCE
2. EMERGENCY ENTRANCE
3. AMBULANCE ENTRANCE
4. NURSING UNITS
5. COURTYARD

SITE PLAN
1. MAIN ENTRANCE
2. EMERGENCY ENTRACE
3. SERVICE ENTRANCE



RESOURCES LIMESTONE: Mezger Enterprises; **METAL MATERIALS**: Berridge Manufacturing; **ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK**: Kawneer Company, Inc.; **ROOF WALLS AND PANELS**: Berridge Manufacturing; **MEMBRANE ROOFING**: Stevens Roofing Systems; **TILE**: Terra Green Ceramics, Inc. (Intertech Flooring); **ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS**: Certainteed Ceilings, Tectum, Inc.; **WOOD FLOORING**: Hill Country Woodworks of Texas; **LAMINATE FLOORING**: Forbo, Expanko, Inc. (Intertech Flooring); **WALL PANELS**: Marlite; **PAINTS**: Sherwin-Williams; **CARPET**: Interface, Shaw (Intertech Flooring); **METAL WINDOWS**: Kawneer; **INTERIOR SIGNAGE**: ASI-Modulex/Houston; **EXTERIOR SIGNAGE**: Austin Architectural Graphics; **SUNDIAL MEDALLIONS**: Building Image Group

Living in Balance

PROJECT Ramchandani Residence, Houston
CLIENT Mahesh and Devika Ramchandani
ARCHITECT Intexure Architects
DESIGN TEAM Russell Hruska, AIA; Rame Hruska, AIA
CONTRACTOR Mainland Construction Inc.
CONSULTANTS CBM Engineers
PHOTOGRAPHER Rame Hruska, AIA

By **MARK SCHATZ, AIA**

SOMETIMES THE BEST SENSE OF WELL-BEING comes from being in tune with one's environment in the sense that the environment is a carefully constructed mirror reflecting back views of our better personal qualities. When handled architecturally these expressions of our philosophy, values, and intentions can find their way into daily routines that then become a pattern for living, which constantly reinforces and reinvigorates. Such is the case in the recently completed Ramchandani house in Houston by Intexure Architects for a cardiovascular surgeon and his family.

When the Mahesh and Devika Ramchandani decided to build a new house they also decided to take a serious and thoughtful look into how they wanted to live. That led to the remarkable realization that what they were about to build would in the end be an expression of themselves. This profound realization set in motion a process of self-examination that ultimately brought about a desire to integrate and reconcile competing aspects of the cultural heritage of their roots in India, their life in the modern garden city of Houston, as well as their personal values. These goals, they began to understand, could not be achieved simply through the adaptation of a "style."

Initially the Ramchandanis attended a series of real estate open houses but quickly concluded that the vast majority of upper-middle-class homes suffered the same stock commodification and image-driven foibles of suburban builder tract homes. It soon became clear that they would have to build to get what they wanted. Mahesh comments that "houses really are an expression of who you are and what you think is important, whether you realize it or not." With this decision came the revelation that they needed the professional services of an architect. The family began attending local architectural home tours and in the fall of 2004 came across a residence designed by Intexure Architects in West University, a village city within Houston's inner loop. Struck by the simplicity and openness of the design, the Ramchandanis decided they had found an architect who would understand their goals and provide a framework of refined simplicity .

Aware of the clients' desire to integrate aspects of their Indian cultural heritage into the house, Intexure began the design process by researching historical prototypes, including the traditional nine-square-courtyard house with a central space focused on shared family activities. That space quickly became the skeletal basis for the house. Providing a central shared space for family events and ceremonies, holiday gatherings, entertaining for family and friends, and hosting music recitals became one the major design objectives for the project—a house that would reflect the lives of its inhabitants, their traditions, passions, and sense of community.

Along with this was the desire for a sense of grounding and permanence that would be expressed through the traditional concrete and masonry construction techniques of India.

Early in the design process Mahesh had a conversation with a fellow physician friend and architectural enthusiast who asked what kind of house he wanted to build. When Mahesh said modern but in tune with his heritage and hometown of Houston, his doctor friend introduced him to the work of the Japanese architect Tadao Ando. An impromptu trip to see the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth solidified the desire to pursue an adapted construction approach that employed traditional Indian materials (along with the economy of regional stick framing and steel) and confirmed the belief that ideas could be clearly expressed through architecture.

Simplicity of design, self-adorning materials, and direct, expressed construction techniques are juxtaposed throughout the house, with more exuberant and bold architectural forms and volumes found within the main functional blocks. It is a gymnastic mix of calm and crescendo existing side by side, varying in intensity based on location and time of day as light and shadows play across the surfaces and inhabit the interior spaces.

Approached from the street the house presents itself as a bold and dynamic presence bounded by the overarching canopies of four very large oak trees that nestle and contain the corners of the house. The leading edges of the two primary cast-concrete walls penetrate the exterior facade and sweep back to either side framing a promenade to the front door and establishing a spatial sequence that draws the eye to a modest, yet crisply delineated modern door within the main western wall. The effect is an interesting counterpoint to recent trends, represented up and down the same street, as here the architect has used a grandness of space preceding the main entry as the bold design stroke instead of the all too common artificial bombastic portico that typifies so many recent Houston homes regardless of their stylistic dress. Despite the dramatically bold presentation to the street, one is immediately struck by the honesty of this design move, as it is in fact a visual teaser for the more refined directness of expression that characterizes the majority of the interior.

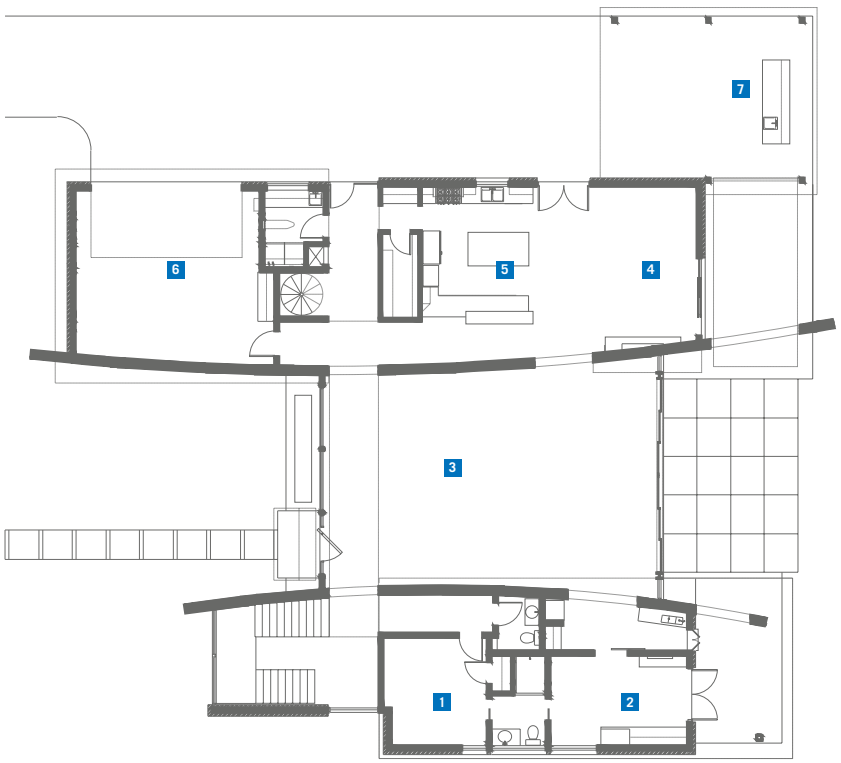
Large, clearly defined rectilinear volumes of the bedroom wing and the stair tower anchor the visual periphery along the primary approach. A visual richness within these volumes presents itself through the use of several different materials that lends discrete identity to each. The bedroom wing is clad in galvanized aluminum shingles that juxtapose a softer scale and light shimmer to the heavy concrete curved walls that sit below. The main stair tower is a dramatic vertical space screened by

a window wall. The central facade wall is a two-story-tall translucent wall screen that implies a soft transition to the main living space beyond while maintaining full privacy to the street and filtering the western sun exposure. In the evening this wall glows with a soft luminosity, nestled between the concrete walls that appear more grounded as shadows rise from the ground in the twilight. Here the metaphor of the living space as a precious thing being protected and nurtured is articulated further by the main space beyond, dematerializing into a volume of softly described light bounded with a visual tension to the heavy grounded opacity of the curving concrete walls.

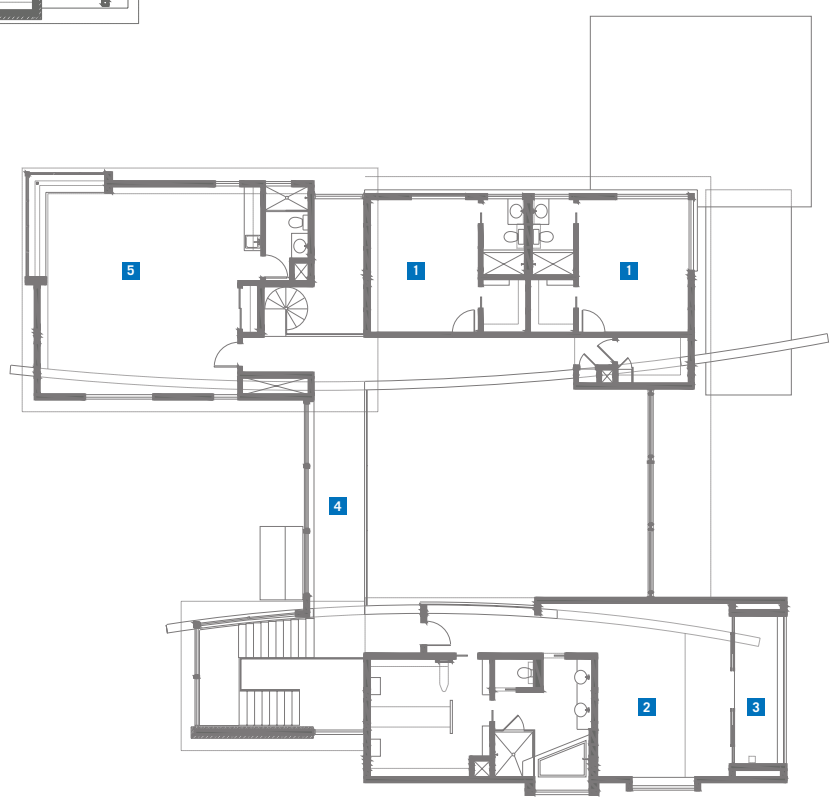
Once inside, a spacious two-and-a-half-story open volume greets visitors who are flanked by the two concrete walls that rise up and become the balustrade for the second floor interior balcony halls and supports for the connecting bridge. Above, lit by a flood of light from high clerestory windows, a razor thin white roof plane hovers above in stark contrast to the visually heavy ground plane. To the east a floor-to-ceiling, steel-framed wall of glass visually extends the large central gathering space out into the yard as a glass-enclosed version of the traditional Indian courtyard. This visual linkage is further dramatized by a series of smaller adjacent spaces that step down the scale and connect horizontally to adjacent "support" spaces in the house and by the more formal saffron-colored vertical panels located along the property line which draw the eye out from the interior and visually bound the perimeter of the garden. A large sliding-glass wall opens from the living room onto a generous patio sheltered by a sweeping, thin roof plane that appears to hover disengaged from the glass above. A Houston house in the true sense, the design integrates the indoors and outdoors into one large flowing space that teeters between crisp definition and indeterminacy, with the verdant majesty of the surrounding oaks and the new under-canopy landscaping appearing to occupy the main living space.

The spatial sense of the main room imbues the space with a feeling of calm amid a vibrant and unfolding series of changing light and sound that constantly reinforce and sometimes accentuate each other. The subtle dynamism of the main space, infused with the underlying rhythms of function and habit, has pleasantly surprised the Ramchandanis. After having lived in the house for six months, they say the new house has exceeded thier expectations in helping them achieve balance in their life, and that it simply feels good to be home.

Mark Schatz, AIA, is a principal of m+a architecture studio in Houston.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1. BEDROOM
2. STUDY
3. DININGROOM
4. FAMILY ROOM
5. KITCHEN
6. GARGAGE
7. OUTDOOR KITCHEN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1. BEDROOM
2. MASTER BEDROOM
3. BALCONY
4. BRIDGE
5. GAMEROOM

RESOURCES FENCES, GATES, AND HARDWARE: Custom Metal Designs, LP; **MASONRY UNITS**: D'Hanis Brick & Tile Co.; **ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK, HANDRAILS AND RAILINGS**: Custom Metal Designs, LP; **FASCIA AND SOFFIT PANELS**: James Hardie Siding; **METAL DOORS AND FRAMES**: Vistawall; **PREASSEMBLED METAL DOOR AND FRAME UNITS**: Metal-Craft Products, Fleetwood Windows & Doors; **SPECIALTY DOORS**: Nightingale Architectural Doors Inc.; **ENTRANCES**: Vistawall; **METAL WINDOWS**: RAM Industries; **TILE**: American Tile; **EXTERIOR SUN CONTROL DEVICES**: Regal Plastic Supply Co.; **TUB AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES AND MIRRORS**: Dauphin Sales, Inc; **APPLIANCES**: Thermador and KitchenAid (Manna Distributors, Inc.); **SHADES**: Solarfective (Architectural Fabric Systems); **FURNISHINGS**: Ligne Roset/Houston

First Step to a New Campus

PROJECT University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Outpatient Building, Dallas
CLIENT University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas
ARCHITECT FKP Architects in association with John Lee, FAIA
DESIGN TEAM John Lee, FAIA; Ed Huckaby, FAIA; Michael Shirley, AIA; Jon Franklin, AIA
CONSULTANTS DataCom Design Group LLC (technology); ccrd partners (MEP); Datum Gojer Engineers, LLC (structural and civil); HELP Equipment Planning (equipment planning); O'Neill Hill & Assoc. (furniture consulting); Tycher Associates (landscape architecture)
PHOTOGRAPHER Aker/Zvonkovic Photography

by ANN CHRISTENSEN

PEOPLE COME TO HEALTHCARE FACILITIES TO BE HEALED, so it is reasonable for them to expect treatment based on the latest research and technology that will aid their recovery. Patients also might expect that facility to be an environment designed not only to prevent ill health but to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Designed by FKP Architects in association with John Lee, FAIA, the new UT Southwestern Medical Center Outpatiend Building focuses on the patient's experience. The architects have effectively applied the extensive research linking daylight and views to patient healing. Daylight floods the public zones of the building located along the north and west edges of the floor plates. The west-facing waiting rooms are glazed with ceramic frit glass and overlook the mature trees of the adjacent 1950s-era residential neighborhood.

The seven-story, 209,000-square-foot building, located in Dallas near the intersection of Inwood Road and Harry Hines Boulevard, represents the main component of the first phase of the Clinical Campus Master Plan and Ambulatory Surgical Center. The master plan is also a collaboration between FKP and John Lee. Subsequent phases of the master plan, which will ultimately replace the existing St. Paul University Hospital, include construction of two additional outpatient clinical towers, a central energy plant, a medical office building, and three in-patient towers zigzagging along Inwood Road. Also planned is the expansion of the Outpatient Building's first and second levels to interconnect all the towers. According to Michael Shirley, AIA, FKP's senior project designer, the roof of this future two-story base will serve as an exterior terrace "augured" with ground-level courtyards to provide daylight into the deep recesses of the plan.

The existing site offered little open ground for the new Outpatient Building, especially since St. Paul University Hospital continued to operate throughout the construction and existing subsurface stormwater culverts and utility lines cross the site. In developing the site, however, some space was cleared by relocating existing subterranean fuel tanks for the hospital's electrical generators. The site development plan also calls for landscaping along the perimeter. At present, landscaped green spaces with pedestrian trails mark the three primary vehicular entrances to the Clinical Campus.

Wayfinding inside the building is refreshingly clear, no small accomplishment given typical program requirements for healthcare facilities. Patients entering the building on the ground floor from the parking garages to the north will see the public elevators directly in front of them and smell the coffee brewing in the café located off the lobby. The eleva-

tors lead to the second-level outpatient surgical center and to the clinics located on the upper three floors. Elevator doors open onto tiled elevator lobbies where tables are adorned with floral bouquets. Patients will easily find their doctor's office from the elevator lobbies that directly connect to common waiting rooms along the western perimeter of all three of the upper-most floors. Wood-paneled portals help visitors identify their destination by signifying entrances to the medical clinics.

The new building is divided vertically into two masses. The off-white color of the precast-concrete base and bottle-green colored glass along with the roof trellis match the T. Boone Pickens Biomedical Building on the North Campus. Square, inoperable windows are punched into the two-story, precast-concrete base that houses patient admitting and diagnostic programmatic elements. Third-floor *pilotis* separate the two masses and also support the upper four levels (and will eventually connect the interior to the roof terraces). The south and east facades (which will both face the future towers) are skinned with metal panels punched by square windows shaded by exterior louvers.

The serrated facade along the western elevation adds texture to its surface. The fully glazed, north-facing elevator lobbies overlook the healing garden, a future retail and daycare addition, the existing parking garage, and the UTSW North Campus across Harry Hines Boulevard. Roof trellises reduce heat gain and will visually screen the view of the rooftop cooling towers from the future towers.

The new Outpatient Building is the first phase of the user focused Clinical Campus Master Plan. The orientation of future construction focuses inward toward the center of campus and the healing garden. When completed, "visitors, patients and staff will enjoy an internal focused terrace vertically separated from on grade traffic to provide a quiet contemplative and serene healing oasis that will promote recovery," says Shirley. Also, he says, "travel time for doctors and staff in acute care situations" will benefit from "multilevel connections between the medical towers."

Active programmatic elements such as daycare, retailers including the coffee shop, and most importantly the building entrances, are all planned to be located in the center of the Clinical Campus. However, by relocating these amenities along public street-side sidewalks, the UTSW Medical Center could improve the physical and social landscape of the surrounding community. Offering the retail components to the public could build momentum for future transit-oriented development that would benefit the adjacent residential neighborhoods and medical center as it seeks to retain qualified employees. Public transportation already exists within walking

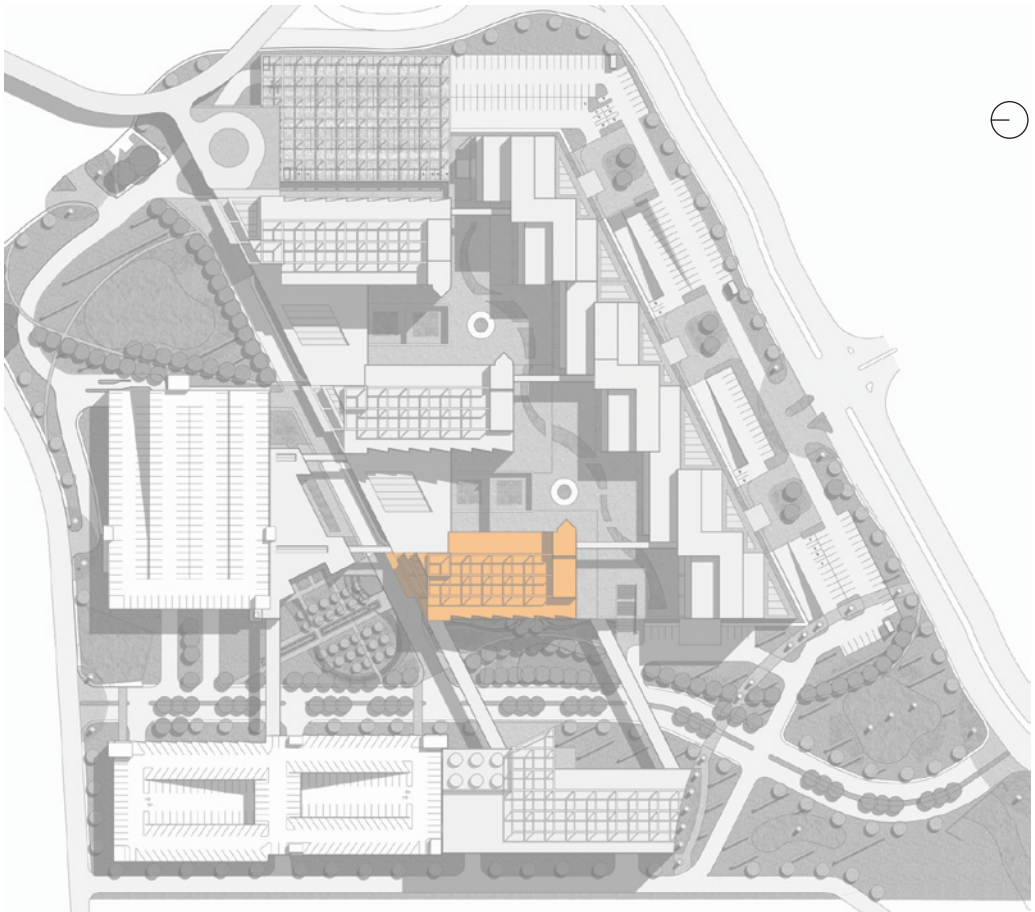
distance of the Clinical Campus. The Trinity Railway Express Medical/Market Center commuter rail station is located on the South Campus.

As social catalysts, healthcare organizations draw together people from all walks of life and in doing so can demonstrate healthy lifestyles that dense, mixed-use neighborhoods provide. Clusters of small business can activate sidewalks with coffee shops, eateries, and other entrepreneurs eager to capitalize on the volumes of people that hospitals draw. Demand for healthcare services will grow as the baby boomer generation ages, and as men and women return home from military service. In addition, safe and lively public sidewalks enable retirees continued participation in society even without driver's licenses.

As authors Robin Guenther, FAIA, and Gail Vittori explain in *Sustainable Healthcare Architecture* (Wiley Press, 2008): "The healthcare industry is in a pivotal position to lead the twenty-first century reintegration of environment, health, and economic prosperity. By critically reinventing the hospital as a regenerative place of healing, marshaling purchasing power, and modeling health and wellness within a society in critical need of alternatives to fast food and retail culture, the healthcare industry can signal a new relationship to healing and health."

Medical centers can create more than healing environments. The UT Southwestern Medical Center has all the elements needed to create an attractive, walkable community. Here is an opportunity for a single client/architect collaboration to kindle pedestrian-friendly, economically vibrant neighborhood growth.

Ann Christensen teaches at UT Arlington's School of Architecture.



MASTER PLAN
OUTPATIENT BUILDING
FUTURE CONSTRUCTION

TYPICAL CLINIC FLOOR PLAN
1. ELEVATOR LOBBY
2. WAITING AREA
3. CLINIC

RESOURCES **SITE, STREET AND MALL FURNISHINGS**: Landscape Forms; **PRECAST ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE (GARAGE)**: Gate Precast Co.; **ROOFING**: Johns Manville (Anchor Roofing); **ROOF AND WALL PANELS**: Alcoa Architectural Products (Trainor Glass Co.); **WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES**: Marshfield DoorSystems; **ENTRANCE AUTO DOORS**: Stanley Access Technologies; **GLASS**: Oldcastle Glass; **CURTAINWALL**: Texas Wall Systems; **STRUCTURAL GLASS**: Innovative Structural Glass, Inc. (Premier Glass Products); **TILE**: Sigma Marble & Granite; **AWNINGS**: USA Canvas Shoppe; **RADIATION SHIELDING**: ETS Lindgren; **LOBBY LIGHTING**: LESCO Architectural Lighting; **FABRIC CANOPY LIGHTING**: Vision3 Lighting

Healthful Outlook

PROJECT Toyota Family Health Center, San Antonio
CLIENT Toyota Motor Manufacturing
ARCHITECT Rehler Vaughn & Koone Inc.
DESIGN TEAM Richard A. Keeler, AIA; Xavier Gonzalez, Assoc. AIA; Conrad D. Martinez; Albert Gonzales; James A. Polonis; Christina Davis; Kimberley Wolf
CONTRACTOR Walbridge-Bartlett Cocke, Joint Venture
CONSULTANTS Lundy & Franke Engineering (structural); Pape-Dawson Engineers (civil); ms2 (MEP)
PHOTOGRAPHER Chris Cooper

by J. DOUGLAS LIPSCOMB, AIA

LOCATED ON THE CAMPUS of the new Toyota truck manufacturing facility on the south side of San Antonio, the Toyota Family Heath Center provides the automaker's employees and their families with the full range of basic medical services. The architects sited the building in a meadow adjacent to a stand of brushy trees. When approaching the building from the parking area, the steel-framed porte-cochere, a metal-clad building wall, and a stucco screen wall all appear to radiate outward from the central rotunda, providing a dynamic and sculptural composition of intersecting geometric forms and materials set on a grassy plain.

The program areas are organized within a simple box through which runs a day-lit spine that terminates in cylindrical elements at either end. Plentiful daylight enters the spine through a translucent, glazed roof, offering patients with a pleasant interior environment and an easily comprehended point of reference for the building's spatial organization. In addition to serving the functional necessity of offering a wider circulation area near the entry point, the funnel shape of the circulation spine created by the skewed geometry of the enclosing walls serves to intensify the axial nature of the space through a visually forced perspective.

The large rotunda at the north end of the circulation spine marks the building's entrance and serves as a central waiting area for patients after they check in at the center's main reception and prior to being sent to a specific care area. Services include primary medical and dental care, physical therapy, an eye center, a pharmacy, and an imaging center.The architects conceived of this large rotunda waiting space as "a contemporary rendition of the Texas front porch" in which patients could enjoy a sweeping 180-degree view of the surrounding landscape through the rotunda's east-facing, full-height glazing.

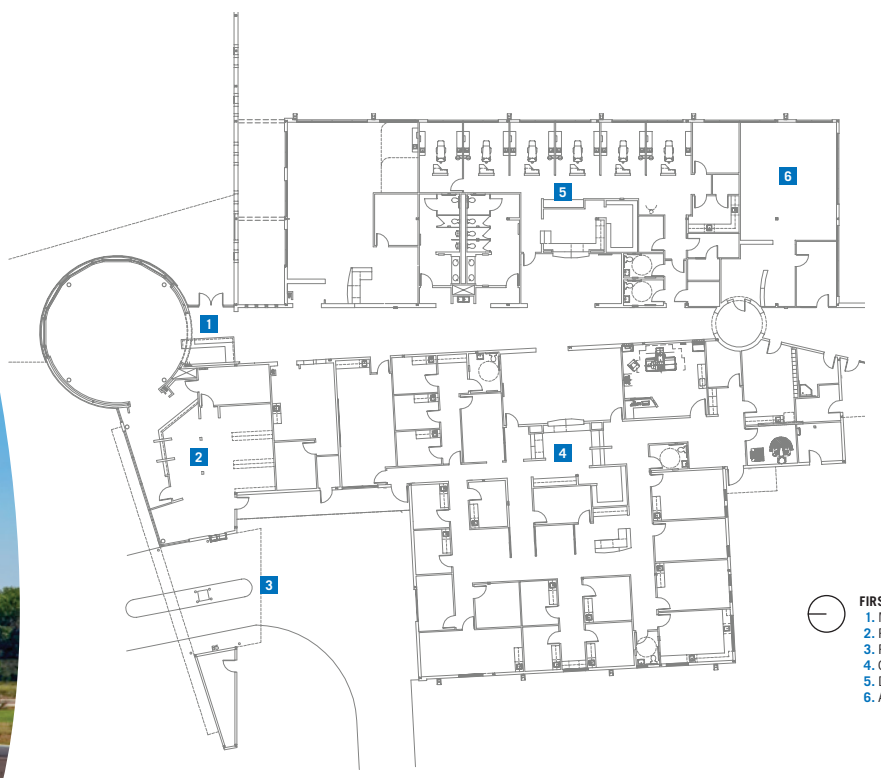
The rotunda successfully reinterprets the Texas front porch as a place from which one can enjoy panoramic views, but the front porch's other role, announcing the place of entry, seems to have posed a dilemma for the architects. To preserve the rotunda space as a room for waiting, the architects tucked the entry behind the rotunda relative to the parking area. Consequently, although the dynamic geometry of the rotunda and the porte-cochere is suggestive of the entrance and immediately catches one's eye from the parking lot upon arrival in a vehicle, it is less obvious exactly where one enters the building itself. First-time visitors will be drawn to the glazed rotunda with the anticipation of finding the entrance, but will have to follow the curve of the rotunda wall before eventually encountering the front door. Fortunately, most of the building's users will be repeat patients, who, with familiarity, will overcome this ambiguity.

The smaller rotunda at the other end of the central spine provides a termination to the public section of the spine and a transition to the back-of-house administrative areas and employee entry. In comparison to the elegant larger rotunda, with its generous daylight and its expansive views of the landscape at the entrance end of the circulation spine, the terminus at the employee end of the spine seems somewhat anticlimactic.

In the physical therapy and dental-care areas especially, generous glazing allows for ample daylight and additional scenic views of the landscape. The ability to visually connect with the outdoors is undoubtedly calming to anyone undergoing treatment. The architects sensitively provided a stucco screen wall that encloses a modest courtyard visible through the window wall of the physical therapy area, thus simultaneously providing patients undergoing treatment with daylight and a view to nature while maintaining privacy. As seen from the dental-care areas, the landscape offers an interesting juxtaposition between the manicured foreground consisting of lawn, rock, and boulder garden and planting beds in contrast to the more distant natural landscape. On a recent visit to the center, the director of dental care reported that patients found the environment with its pleasant daylight and views comfortable and reassuring and that the employees found the spaces to be highly functional, efficient, and ergonomically accommodating.

The combination of exterior materials and forms, including the solid stucco screen wall and the light metal panel clad and glazed building envelope, are suggestive of an appropriate synthesis of traditional Spanish and Mexican-influenced San Antonio architecture and the modernity of automobile manufacturing. Appropriately on the interior, the skewed geometry of the building's primary organizational device—the spine—also gives order to the interior ornamentation in both the pattern of white floor tiles that marches down the spine and through the rotunda, as well as the treatment of the ceiling pattern of the rotunda. Although not completely an uncommon use of the system today, the "floating" of the acoustical ceiling system in patient treatment areas through the introduction of a gap between the edge of the ceiling and the wall turns the otherwise typically uninspiring standard ceiling into an interesting sixth surface of the room. That simple expression of the ceiling is typical of what is the greatest virtue of the Toyota Family Health Center—the emphasis of a few dramatic gestures within an overall simple building form. Combining these gestures with modest innovations wrought in standard materials creates a pleasant and welcoming experience for the patients.

J. Douglas Lipscomb, AIA, practices with Marmon Mok in San Antonio.



RESOURCES **GLAZED MASONRY UNITS:** L&R Landscape, Inc.; **ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK:** KP Kabinets, Inc.; **EXTERIOR INSULATION AND FINISH SYSTEMS:** ParexLahabra, Inc.; **ROOF AND WALL PANELS:** Alpolic; **METAL DOORS AND FRAMES:** Dumas Hardware Company; **GYPSUM BOARD FRAMING AND ACCESSORIES:** Building Specialties (Amistad Construction); **TILE:** Crossville, Master Tile; **ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS:** Armstrong, Hunter Douglas (Amistad Construction); **MANUFACTURED CASEWORK:** KP Kabinets, Inc.; **SHADES:** Southwest Decor

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1. MAIN ENTRY
2. PHARMACY
3. PHARMACY DRIVE-THRU
4. CLINIC
5. DENTAL
6. ADMINISTRATION

Reimagined Introvert

PROJECT Maverick Activities Center, Arlington

CLIENT The University of Texas at Arlington

ARCHITECT Page Southerland Page in association with Hughes Group Architects

DESIGN TEAM Jeff Bricker, AIA; Wayne Hughes, AIA; Amado Fernandez, AIA; Julie Rusk, Assoc. AIA; Dick Robinson, AIA; William Echterling, AIA

CONTRACTOR Hunt Construction Group

CONSULTANTS Page Southerland Page (MEP); Charles Gojer & Associates (structural and civil); Schirmer Engineering (fire protection); Cedrick Frank Associates (acoustics); JCL Landscape Architecture (landscape); Halford Busby (cost estimating)

PHOTOGRAPHER Craig D. Blackmon, FAIA

by **TODD HAMILTON**

THE NEW MAVERICK ACTIVITIES CENTER at The University of Texas at Arlington is among several new buildings erected on campus after a construction hiatus of many years. Last year the administration completed a revised master plan for the twenty-first century. The master plan, designed by Carter & Burgess of Fort Worth with Ayers Saint Gross of Washington, D.C.,guides the development patterns of future buildings, pedestrian circulation, and the landscape spaces in between. For much of its history as an urban university, UTA students lived elsewhere and commuted to campus for classes. But that image has transformed into an almost around-the-clock environment with the addition of numerous privately funded apartment complexes on or near campus. The recently expanded Maverick Activities Center also has helped broaden campus life. Completed in March, the project added 80,000 square feet and revamped the existing building's 115,000 square footage, updating the original 1970s-era facility to a state-of-the-art complex for sports and exercise. Hughes Group of Virginia designed the project, with the Houston office of Page Southerland Page serving as architect of record.

The previous activities center was a massive, virtually windowless brick monolith containing large sport courts. Surrounded by parking lots and trees, the interior was dark, with poorly lit halls and institutional-like facilities. Glazed terracotta tile in pastel colors, reminiscent of high school locker rooms, lined the hallways. Truly an introverted building, there was no visual connection with the outside at any level. The scope of the expansion project included addressing the building's visual constraints by adding clerestory windows to the large volumes, covering the glazed-block walls along the corridors, and wrapping pre-existing blank facades with outdoor sport courts (and an outdoor movie theater planned for the future). Handball courts have been modernized with frameless glass doors and better lighting. In the near future a rock-climbing wall will be installed adjacent to the handball courts.

Viewed from the exterior, the most visible improvement is the glass skin that now wraps the old activities center. With its new transparent facade, the Maverick Center addition is the antithesis of the old. Now the center is light and airy, and powerful in its architectural section. Sunlight basks the spaces during the day, and at night the building glows brilliantly like a beacon along Nedderman Drive. Nighttime activities are on display within the luminous interior where an elevated indoor running tracks encircles the sports courts and exercise rooms are filled with students, faculty, and alumni burning off calories. The ground floor of the addition contains the Department of Kinesiology, a branch cyber station, rooms for yoga,

aerobics, and martial arts, a long-overdue juice bar for the west side of the campus, and several new regulation-size sport courts. In response to the need for safe and secure campus facilities, card-swipe access is required for all who enter.

The Maverick Center is visually aligned to a generous pedestrian spine that connects the campus with the pre-existing activities building. Terminating this student spine is a grand staircase leading to a mezzanine with 360-degree visibility to the basketball courts, the street, and the campus beyond. Students use this space as a social corridor, with ample seating for individual privacy as well as small group seating. The second-floor mezzanine is where serious exercise takes place. Huge galleries of treadmills, weight-lifting equipment, cardiovascular machines, etc. are open to the double-height volume and the street. A total of 20,000 sf is devoted to physical training and individual fitness. Large flat-screen TVs are placed throughout the building keeping everyone abreast of sports and politics. A video game room provides a social outlet for those who prefer to compete electronically. The outcome is a state-of-the-art, cybernetic-enhanced environment that is extremely popular. No private fitness center in the Dallas-Fort Worth area can match the dynamic interior of this new facility.

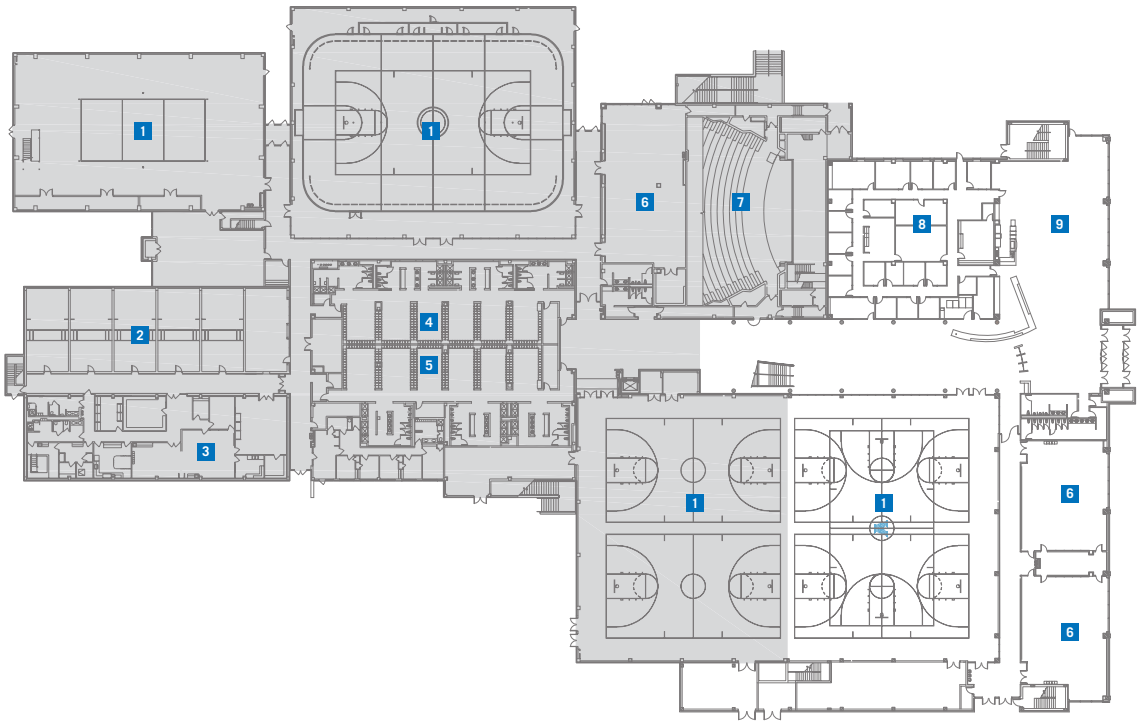
The site relationship between the newly combined building footprint and the nearby campus buildings is less successful. Academic buildings need to be a part of the larger campus context while also maintaining an independent identity. The Maverick Center is unique in its purpose, and therefore is much different than a laboratory or classroom building. Architects must analyze this "fit" and carefully tailor the new to the existing environment. However, the main entrance, while visually prominent and bold, appears indifferent to its immediate surroundings and to the alignment of the street leading to it. Instead of offering pedestrians shelter from the sun and rain with a loggia or some other protective structure, students gathering in front of the new activities building encounter an open plaza that is too large, too hard, and too suburban in its setback from Nedderman Drive. Also, the landscape design is a freeform pattern of river rock with no geometric relationship to the Maverick Center,designed by Carter & Burgess of Fort Worth with Ayers Saint Gross of Washington, D.C.,

Symmetry drives the initial design parti with two-story glass wings flanking the entrance, although the blue low-emissivity glass curtain walls seem better suited for corporate office buildings than academic architecture. (Rumor has it that the blue color was selected to mimic

school colors.) Random residential-looking stone panels bookend the main glass entrance where classical cut-stone blocks might have been a more appropriate choice. However, none of these aesthetic aspects detract from the building's vibrant interior and intense daily use.

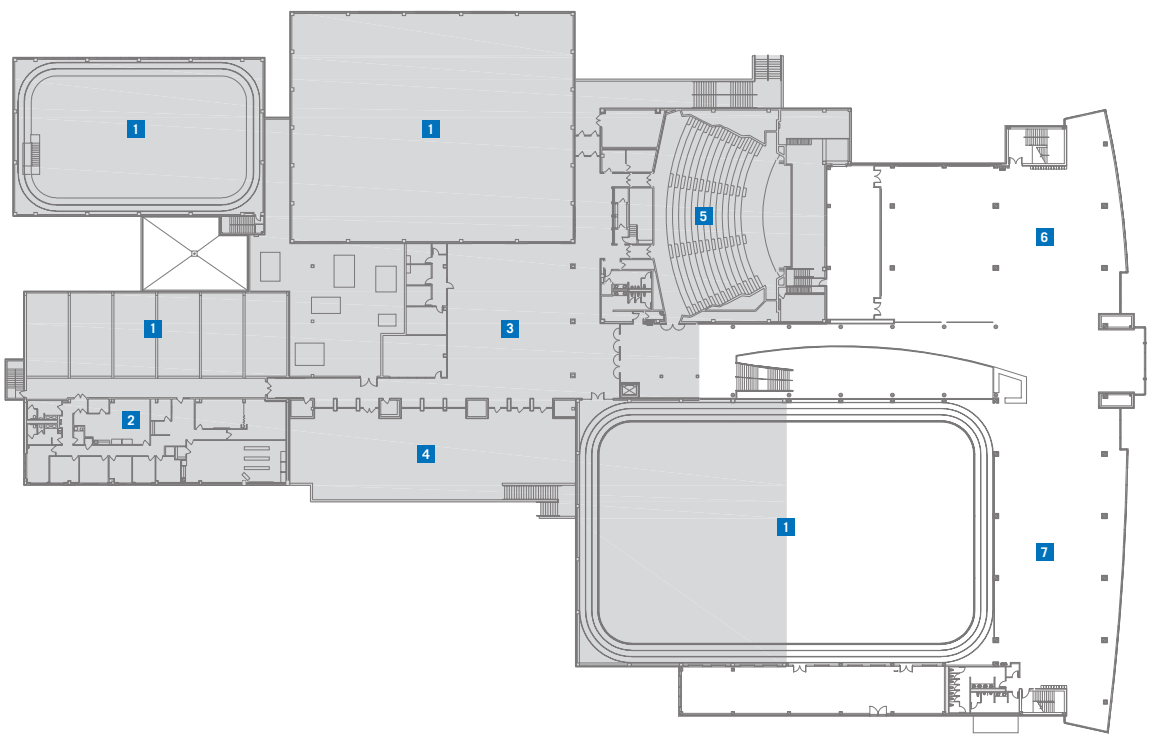
Most UT Arlington campus buildings are big brick monoliths with rhythmic, punched window openings. These buildings are functional and pragmatic without the trappings of architectural history or style found at many older campuses. Each tends to mirror the architectural fashion of the era they were built, starting in the 1960s with Spanish Colonial capped with red tile roofs and embellished facades with arches, but clearly designed on a human scale. More recent buildings tended to be big if not huge, scaled in response to increasingly larger enrollments of the colleges and professional programs on campus. Trees, landscape, and walkways have served to mediate any significant differences in size and scale between buildings. Despite some contextual concerns, the new Maverick Center is a successful and welcomed addition to the campus life. It gives the students and faculty a first-class exercise/sports center like those found at flagship Texas universities.

Todd Hamilton is a Dallas architect and professor of architecture at UT Arlington.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
PRE-EXISTING FOOTPRINT
1. SPORT COURT
2. RAQUETBALL COURT
3. KINESIOLOGY
4. WOMEN'S LOCKERS
5. MEN'S LOCKERS
6. MULTIPURPOSE
7. AUDITORIUM
8. ADMINISTRATIVE SUITE
9. COMPUTER CAFÉ

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
PRE-EXISTING FOOTPRINT
1. OPEN TO BELOW
2. KINESIOLOGY
3. GAMEROOM
4. PATIO
5. AUDITORIUM
6. WEIGHTS
7. FITNESS



RESOURCES **FENCES, GATES, AND HARDWARE**: Ameristar Fence Products; **MASONRY UNITS**: Palestine Concrete Tile Co.; **LIMESTONE**: Texas Quarries; **MASONRY VENEER ASSEMBLIES**: Acme; **STRUCTURAL STEEL**: Basden Steel; **EXPANSION JOINT COVERS**: Balco; **LAMINATES**: Nevamar (Cabinet Crafters, Inc.); **WATERPROOFING**: Carlisle Residential; **ROOF AND DECK INSULATION**: GAF; **ROOF AND WALL PANELS**: Reynobond (Classic Architectural Products); **METAL ROOFING**: Pac-Clad; **WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES**: Marshfield DoorSystems; **ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS**: Kawneer; **GLAZED CURTAINWALL**: Kawneer; **GYPSUM BOARD FRAMING AND ACCESSORIES**: Dietrich Metal Framing; **TILE**: Dal Tile (Fabulous Floors Inc.); **ATHLETIC SURFACING**: Robbins and Mondo (Ponder Company, Inc.); **ACOUSTICAL WALL TREATMENTS**: Acoustical Resources; **CARPET**: Lees (Fabulous Floors Inc.); **GRILLES AND SCREENS**: Ruskin Company; **SIGNAGE AND GRAPHICS**: ASI Modulex; **GYMNASIUM ACCESSORIES**: Fair Play, Draper/EZ Fold, Sports Imports (John F. Clark Co., Inc.)

McAllen Convention Center

PROJECT McAllen Convention Center, McAllen
CLIENT City of McAllen
ARCHITECT Gignac Architects (architect of record); Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates (design architect)
DESIGN TEAM Mike Ezell, AIA; Raymond Gignac, AIA; Jack Plaxco, AIA; Rob Svedberg, AIA; Jeff Wierenga, AIA; Paul Rybalka, AIA; Rolando Garza, AIA
CONTRACTOR SpawGlass Contractors
CONSULTANTS Halff Associates(civil); SWA Group Landscape Architects (landscape); Walter P. Moore (structural); CHPA (MEP); BAi, LLC (acoustics/AV); William Caruso & Associates (food service); TVS Interiors (interior design); FMG Design (graphics/signage)
PHOTOGRAPHERS Brian Gassel, TVS

RESOURCES **UNIT PAVERS:** Pacific Clay Products, Inc.; **FENCES, GATES AND HARDWARE:** Ametco Manufacturing; **SITE, STREET, AND MALL FURNISHINGS:** Landscape Forms; **PRECAST ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE:** Redondo Manufacturing; **CAST STONE:** Advanced Cast Stone; **UNIT MASONRY WALL ASSEMBLIES:** Valley Builders Supply, Inc.; **GLUE-LAMINATED TIMBER:** Structural Wood Systems; **ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK:** South Texas Woodmill Inc.; **WATERPROOFING:** DuPont Tyvek; **BUILDING INSULATION:** Owens Corning; **ROOF TILES:** Gladding McBean (Sechrist-Hall Co., Inc.); **WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES:** The Maiman Co. (Link & Assoc.); **SPECIALTY DOORS:** Cornell (Harlingen Door Co., Inc.); **ENTRANCES:** Kawneer; **UNIT SKYLIGHTS:** Naturalite Skylight Systems; **GLASS:** Viracon; **GLAZED CURTAINWALL:** Kawneer; **TILE:** Daltile; **ACOUSTICAL WALL TREATMENTS:** Tectum, Inc.; **PAINTS:** Sherwin-Williams; **CARPET:** Axminster (Ulster Carpets); **SIGNAGE:** Esbee Sign Systems; **OPERABLE PARTITIONS:** Moderco

The design of the McAllen Convention Center integrates state-of-the-art technology with traditional architectural forms. Building materials including stone, brick, and clay tile reflect the cultural history of the Rio Grande Valley. The 170,000-square-foot Convention Center includes a 60,000-square-foot exhibit hall, a 10,000-square-foot ballroom, referred to as the Monarch Room, and 15,000 sf of meeting rooms. Designed by Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates, in association with Gignac Architects, the 175-acre convention center campus also includes a future 300-room headquarters hotel, a future 2,500-seat performing arts center, a veterans' memorial, over 600,000 square feet of retail space, and an oval park located at the center of the campus. The McAllen Convention Center received a Merit Award for Design in the Public Realm by the Texas chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. The landscape architect for the project, SWA Group, designed all exterior pedestrian pavements, special vehicular pavements, the palm courtyard, water features, outdoor lighting, grading, and planting. SWA Group also incorporated stormwater detention to respond to stormwater management criteria and bioswales to aid in filtering run-off from the large parking areas.

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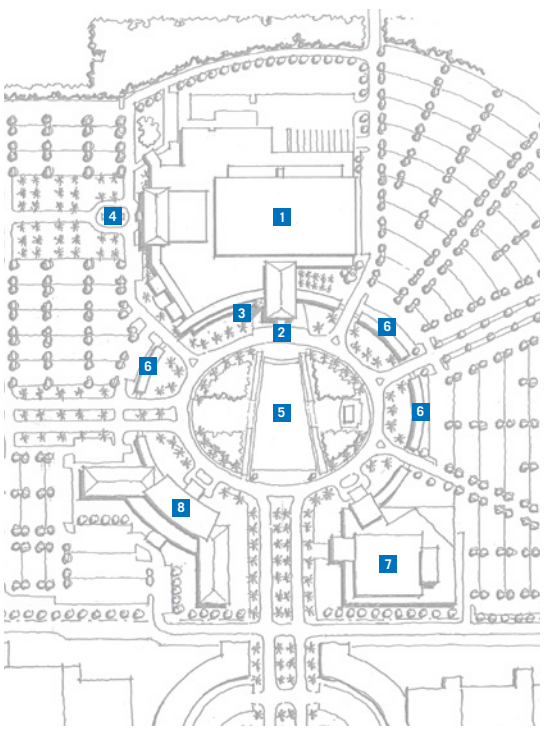

SITE PLAN
1 CONVENTION CENTER
2 MAIN ENTRY DROP-OFF
3 CLOCK TOWER
4 BALLROOM DROP-OFF
5 OVAL PARK WITH FOUNTAIN
6 ARCADE
7 FUTURE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
8 FUTURE HOTEL

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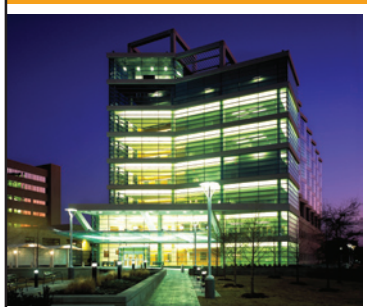

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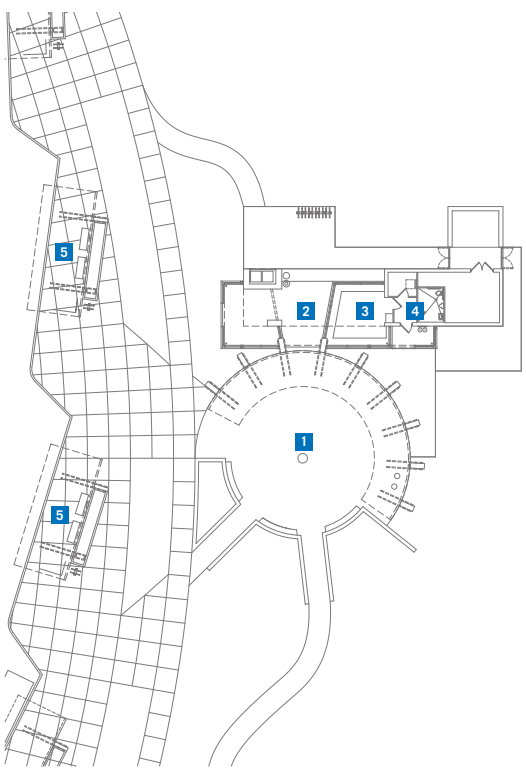
Leander Park and Ride



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1 PLAZA
2 BREEZEWAY
3 OFFICE
4 RESTROOM
5 BUS SHELTER

PROJECT Leander Park and Ride, Leander
CLIENT Captial Metropolitan Transportation Authority
ARCHITECT McKinney Architects
DESIGN TEAM Heather H. McKinney, FAIA; Charles A. York, AIA; Brian Carlson, AIA
CONTRACTOR Solis Constructors
CONSULTANTS HDR/WHM (transportation engineer); Doucet & Associates (feasibility analysis); Associated Consulting Engineers (civil); Jaster-Quintanilla, Austin (structural); Tom Green & Company Engineers (MEP); Garcia Design, Inc. (landscape); fd2s (wayfinding); Kroll (security)
PHOTOGRAPHER R. Greg Hursley Photography

RESOURCES UNIT PAVERS: Pavestone; **UNIT MASONRY WALL ASSEMBLIES:** Acme; **ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK:** Nucor Vulcraft Group; **WATERPROOFING:** BASF Construction Chemicals; **MEMBRANE ROOFING:** Polyglass; **ROOF INSULATION:** Atlas Roofing Corporation; **GLAZED CURTAINWALL:** EFCO Corp.; **GYPSUM BOARD FRAMING AND ACCESSORIES:** Dietrich Metal Framing; **TILE:** American Olean; **TENSILE MEMBRANE STRUCTURES:** Span Systems, Inc.

The newly designed Leander Park and Ride facility provides bus service to the community and will function as the terminus to the new Capital Metro commuter rail line. McKinney Architects designed the transit facility to work efficiently for both buses and pedestrians, in order to encourage the use of the bus system as the public's main method of transportation. Architects have designed a series of bus bays for each bus stop that surround a terminal building. The building includes Capital Metro offices and a restroom facility. A path winds around the building and functions as a way-finding system that easily leads people to the various bus terminals. The sleek design of each bus bay incorporates concrete piers with extended steel bars that support a cantilevered roof. The architects create a comfortable resting space for people as they await their next bus. The Leander Park and Ride was awarded the AIA Austin Citation of Honor Award for Design Excellence in 2007.

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RFI Shootout

By GRANT A. SIMPSON, FAIA, AND JIM ATKINS, FAIA

Fast is fine, but accuracy is everything.
– Wyatt Earp

The architect's documents in this part of the world have always been inherently conceptual. Additional information has typically been required by the contractor from the architect during the construction phase. Up until the 1970s this information was transferred informally during face-to-face meetings or by telephone. Back then, most construction contracts were "lump sum" and the concept of the contractor delivering a "complete" building was alive and well. No documentation of the discussions were needed or prepared.

The proliferation of lawyers and claims in the 1950s and 1960s, coincidental with the invention of professional liability insurance, gave rise to the need for increased documentation. The era of asking questions and giving answers without documentation had come to an end. The Request for Information (RFI) was born.

A Request for Information is most frequently and legitimately used by contractors to ask architects questions about the intent of the construction documents, or to point out perceived omissions, or conflicts in the documents. It began as a written document, now digital, and it is tracked through software management programs capable of producing detailed reports on the RFI status.

Because the contractor is solely responsible for bidding the work responsibly and for determining how the work will be divided among the trades, the contractor must coordinate the scope allocation for pricing and execution of the work of the various subcontractors to assure there is no gap in scope between the trades and that the work as it is constructed is coordinated. These are major elements of the Contractor's Work Plan.

As with any complex human endeavor there are likely to be questions about how the work will be coordinated and sequenced. These subcontractor questions, once fielded almost entirely by the construction manager or general contractor, are now routinely passed through for the architect and engineers to answer.

Lethal Weapons

The need for effective communication notwithstanding, RFIs can be very high risk documents because they are often used for the less legitimate purpose of documenting or at least creating the illusion of negligence by the design professionals. They are almost always presented with a demand that the answer is needed as soon as possible; implying that any time beyond an immediate answer will delay the project.

If AIA document *A201, Article 3.2.1* is followed wherein it requires the contractor to review the contract documents in advance to discover any

missing or erroneous information, the RFI will be sent sufficiently in advance so that it will not be dependent on an immediate answer:

...the Contractor shall, before starting each portion of the Work, carefully study and compare the various Contract Documents relative to that portion of the Work...These obligations are for the purpose of facilitating coordination and construction...

Logically, it follows that if the contractor is demanding immediate answers to their RFIs, they are openly admitting that they have not followed *A201*.

Another popular contractor allegation is that, by virtue of having to ask the RFI question, there is an omission in the drawings. This approach does not recognize or acknowledge that *A201, Article 4.2.14*, anticipates such questions:

The Architect will review and respond to requests for information about the Contract Documents...the Architect will prepare and issue supplemental Drawings and Specifications in response to the requests for information.

A201 addresses with certainty that the drawings and specifications do not contain all of the information required to construct the project. Contractors who comply with *A201* have coordinated their project and developed their work plan early, and their RFIs should not be dependent upon an immediate answer.

Live Ammunition?

Are RFIs contract documents? They are not generally considered so because they cannot change contract cost or time unless incorporated into a contract modification such as a change order. However, in the event the contractor judges the RFI to not change cost or time, then the RFI may well be considered a contract document under the terms of *A201*, which states in *Article 7.4*:

The Architect has authority to order minor changes in the Work not involving adjustment in the Contract Sum or extension of the Contract Time ...

When a contractor determines that the RFI answer changes the contract sum or time, he is prohibited by *A201* from proceeding with that portion of the work without the proper change document. *A201, Article 7*, is very specific as to the documents required for changes in the work:

Changes in the Work may be accomplished after execution of the Contract...by Change Order, Construction Change Directive or order for a minor change in the Work...

This is the source of much dispute in the industry when the contractor elects to proceed with the work anyway, treating the RFI as though it were a Construction Change Directive. When

Misfires

RFIs can often be misused. Some examples include:

INNAPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

An RFI may ask for the size of fasteners to attach sheathing on the building. This is a proprietary issue that is typically determined by the product manufacturer.

MEANS AND METHODS

Questions about means and methods are inappropriate unless the specifications have dictated such.

Since the contractor should be the expert on means and methods, it follows that he is likely best suited to determine the appropriate solution to a troublesome condition. To facilitate this effort, AIA document G716, Request for Information provides for a "proposed solution" to be included by the sender. This usually gives the architect a viable option to immediately consider, and it is frequently chosen as the best solution.

SUBSTITUTION REQUEST

Contractors sometimes ask in an RFI if an alternate product model or manufacturer can be used instead of following the prescribed process for seeking substitution approval.

AMBIGUOUS ANSWERS

Asking a question over and over in a different manner and claiming the repeated RFIs infer that the previous questions were not adequately answered.

BIASED REPORTING

The contractor's RFI log will likely reveal that it is primarily designed to track the architect's shortcomings in addition to the routing and answers to questions. The emergence of document management software has aided and enhanced this objective. In most project meetings these days between the owner, architect and contractor, reports from the RFI log are used to display the delinquency of the architect for all to see.

Interestingly, similar infractions by the contractor are seldom if ever tracked, documented, or displayed. An item such as the submittal schedule, which is necessary for the architect to schedule and coordinate the submittal review process, is infrequently produced by the contractor as required by contract. Similarly, very few architects or contractors track how timely the contractor's submittals are relative to the submittal schedule.

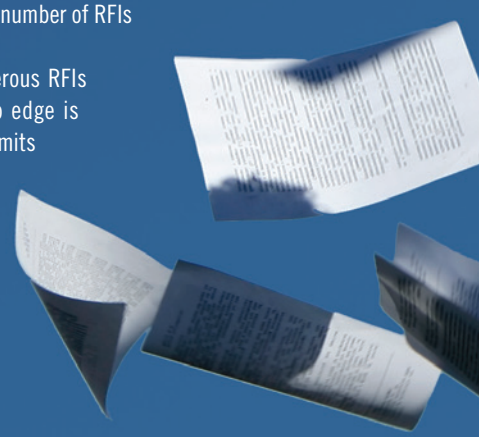
INFLATED NUMBERS AND RESPONSE TIME

Recently, some contractors have begun using an interesting approach that serves to artificially increase the number of RFIs. For example, a contractor issues an RFI and the architect answers and returns it to the contractor the next day. Two weeks later the contractor sends another RFI to the architect asking for confirmation of the prior answer. The architect confirms the answer on the same day.

The contractor's web-based database now reflects that RFI 100 was originally issued to the architect on February 21 but apparently was not closed out with an acceptable answer until the second RFI 13 days later. This technique serves to artificially inflate the number of RFIs and the apparent length of time the architect took to answer.

Another favored tactic to boost RFI count is to issue numerous RFIs asking essentially the same question. For example, the slab edge is not dimensioned around an elevator shaft. The contractor submits separate RFIs for each of the four slab edges. One RFI would have sufficed.

Many RFIs using these tactics would be considered "frivolous," even though the information requested was necessary, simply because of the abusive way the RFI was submitted.



these disputes become claims, the contractor often alleges that he was directed, by the architect's RFI response, to do the additional work.

You may ask, is it reasonable for the contractor to immediately know the RFI answer is increasing the contract sum? The answer is yes, if the contractor has adequately prepared a Work Plan and coordinated the trades.

Firearm Proficiency

The RFI should be used to obtain information that the requesting party cannot access through research, document review, or any other reasonable means. Moreover, the RFI should address only information that does not already exist in a discernable form, or is not reasonably inferable from the documents.

Information may not be specifically stated in the documents, but it may be inferable from them. That is, if a wall section is not cut in a particular area, but all other wall sections contain specific components, it is reasonable to infer that the same components are required for the area in question. *A201, Article 1.2.1*, is very specific in explaining this issue:

The intent of the Contract Documents is to include all items necessary for the proper execution and completion of the Work…The Contract Documents are complimentary, and what is required by one shall be as binding as if required by all; performance by the Contractor shall be required only to the extent consistent with the Contract Documents and reasonably inferable from them as being necessary to produce the indicated results.

However, some contractors seek to split hairs, alleging that if each similar condition is not specifically detailed, the work is not in their scope. Although this is contrary to *A201*, since "inferable" is to a degree subjective, it frequently becomes an issue in dispute.

Returning Fire

How long should it take to answer an RFI? When claims are made against architects a popular allegation is that the architect took too long to provide an acceptable answer and thus delayed the project. Some plaintiff's experts actually take the position that the architect's performance must be measured against the contractor's expectation for receiving the answer rather than a reasonable time relative to the RFI subject matter. This is a patently absurd proposition as it has nothing to do with realistic time limits, reasonable expectations, or the requirement for the contractor to plan the work in advance.

Obviously, how long it takes to answer an RFI will depend on the content of the question. For this reason architects should take care when agreeing to contract provisions or writing specifications that state, "the Architect will respond to RFIs in 10 working days." Much more preferred is, "the Architect will respond to RFIs in an average of 10 working days. It is acknowledged and understood that some RFIs will take longer to answer than others."

Who Fired that Shot?

The first RFIs originated from contractors, and since contractors require more information and clarifications during construction, they send more RFIs. However, information is required by every team member, and the owner and architect can also send RFIs. In fact, using RFIs to request and track information responses is the best way to maintain documentation on time driven activities. AIA document *G716, Request*

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How Many RFIs?

Contractors and owners frequently seek to make a claims issue based on the total RFIs on a project. The overall quantity of RFIs is not necessarily a measure of the quality of the construction documents or the architect's services. They can just as easily reflect the poor quality of the contractor's services or they may be an attempt to obtain clarifications that the contractor in the course of planning and coordinating the work should have made. An unsophisticated or inexperienced contractor may request more information than one with more resources and experience. The simple fact is that contractor-generated RFIs cannot be presumed to be valid.

It is the timing of the RFIs and the nature of the information requested that determine the impact to the project and not the total number. RFIs are a common communication tool in the industry today, and the overall quantity is just as likely to be a measure of the way the contractor or construction manager administers the work rather than a measure of the quality of the construction documents or the architect's services.

Simply trying to cite statistics without presentation of RFI content and a detailed cause and effect analysis is no justification of damages or delays. Further, it is the timing of the RFIs and the nature of the information required as well as the cause and effect relationship that determines the impact to the project.

Obviously, the architect's documents, if insufficient, can cause more RFIs. Just as obviously, insufficient contractor services, or intentional prospecting for RFIs by the contractor can result in even more RFIs.

However, be assured that contractors who do not want a large number of RFIs generally do not have a large number. They strive to find the information they need to construct the building without over-complicating the cumbersome and time-consuming RFI process. You will find that they employ some if not all of these approaches:

- experienced employees
- an effective Contractor's Work Plan
- thorough research
- efficient meetings
- effective trade coordination
- early project buyout
- early issue resolution
- pre-installation conferences
- good relationship with owner and architect
- claims avoidance

The RFI process can be used to make money in excess of the contract instead of for its true intended purpose, but such actions do not yield the quality or efficiency that is otherwise possible. It is interesting that some contractors are not as concerned about their reputation or their track record in project delivery as they are with RFI proliferation. It would be interesting to see the results of a project where a primary objective of the project team was to have the fewest RFIs possible.

for Information, clearly states on the instruction sheet that the document can be used by all parties.

While Requests for Information are a common tool frequently used between contractors and architects in the design and construction industry to facilitate communication, some contractors use them to facilitate making claims. Contractors who want to send RFIs seem to generate more, and contractors who do not want to send RFIs seem to generate fewer.

A high number of RFIs on a project does not always indicate shortcomings on the part of the design professionals. Inexperienced construction staff who struggle with reading the drawings, accelerated project schedules, and poor preparation by the contractor can be among the causes of increased RFIs.

RFIs are an acute source of consternation for design professionals when they are used in a frivolous or unfair manner. Send us your war stories. Tell us how many RFIs are reasonable. Do you have a procedure for controlling the number of RFIs on your projects? Share your experiences with others in an effort to develop strategies. The next time you're staring down the barrel of a tough RFI, stay focused, use your resources, and please heed our warning, be careful out there.

Grant A. Simpson, FAIA, serves as a consultant on project delivery for several international firms where his responsibilities included construction documentation, project management, and loss prevention activities. He has served on the AIA Practice Management Advisory Group and currently serves on the AIA Risk Management Committee.

James B. Atkins, FAIA, is a principal and chief risk management officer with HKS, Inc. He has served on the AIA Risk Management Committee and has chaired the *Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice*, 14th Edition Revision Task Group.

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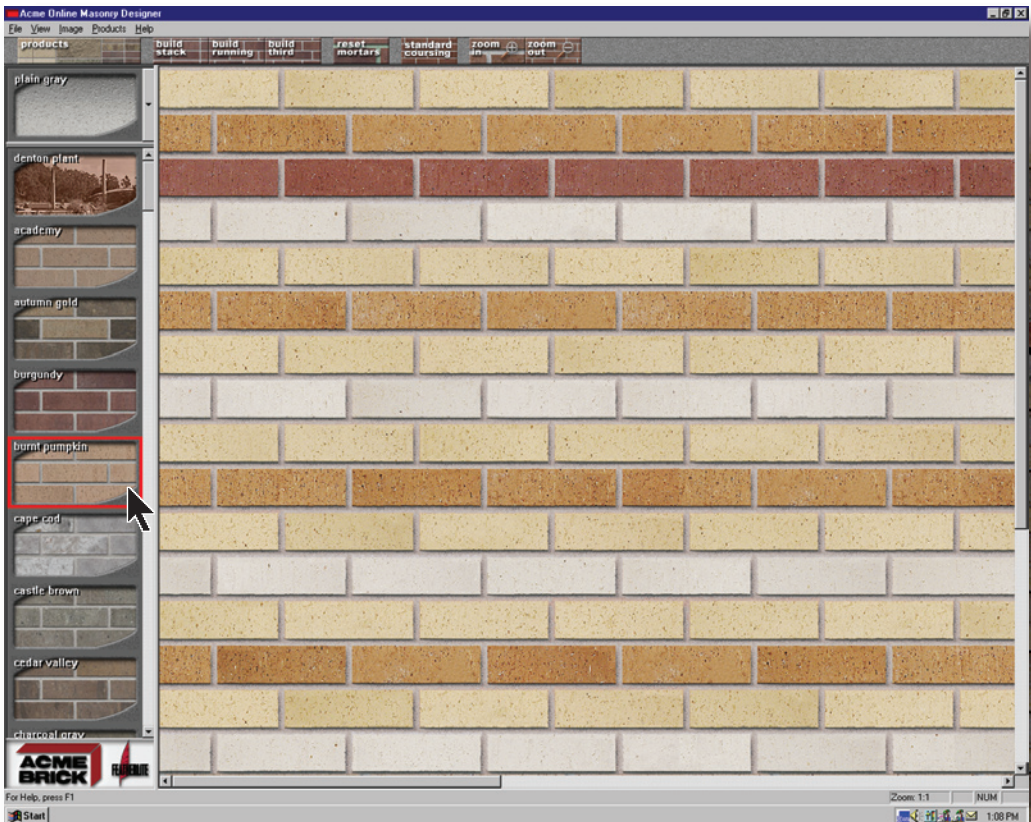

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Projects by Texas Firms Awarded by Tilt-Up Group

The Tilt-up Concrete Association (TCA) recognized the work of two Texas firms in the national organization's 2008 Achievement Awards program. Four of the award-winning projects were designed by Powers Brown Architecture of Houston. The firm also received TCA's Irving Gill Distinguished Architect Award in this year's awards program. The other award-winning Texas project was designed by Fields & Associates Architects of Austin. In all, 40 projects were honored among the 105 entries reviewed by a panel of 13 judges representing TCA's membership.

Powers Brown Architecture's winning projects were:

- **Petrol Valves Office/Warehouse** (warehouse/distribution category) Working with a limited budget and tight timeline, developers for this warehouse and office facility established a U.S. presence for the Italian-based manufacturer/distributor of large valves.
- **Pinch Office and Warehouse facility** (warehouse/distribution category) The office and warehouse facilities of the third-party shipper were built using the tilt-up method, in order to minimize the noise created by a nearby major airport. This method also ensured efficient use of the office and warehouse space.
- **Tornier USA Headquarters** (warehouse/distribution category) The site of the France-based facility faced the problem of excessive sun exposure. A linear canopy element and angular tilt-up walls were incorporated into the design to provide shade on the southern and western ends of the facility.
- **Marshall, Neil & Pauley Corporate Headquarters** (corporate headquarters complex category) The headquarters of the industrial HVAC equipment manufacturer was designed using tilt-up to create an efficient workspace and a showroom.

Fields & Associates Architects' winning project was:

- **Wiley Middle School** (educational category) The 176,000-square-foot, energy-efficient school for Leander ISD was designed using the tilt-up method and built on a fast-track schedule.

Projects by Texas Firms Awarded ASLA Honor Awards

The American Society of Landscape Architect's Texas Chapter presented 29 professional awards to Texas projects. Frontier Texas by Christopher Miller in Dallas was honored with the Award of Excellence. Twelve projects received Honor Awards: Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas by TBG Partners, Austin; Brays Bayou Recreation Greenway by SWA Group, Houston; Oak Court by Mesa Design Group, Dallas; The Pool House by Hocker Design Group, Dallas; Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa by TBG Partners, Austin; Flag Pole Hill Historic Restoration by Jacobs Carter Burgess, Dallas; Leaves Imagination by HNTB, Dallas; Town Lake Park by TBG Partners, Austin; Donley Safety Rest Area by David Baldwin, Plano; Bryant Park by Mesa Design Group, Dallas; Creating Connections 2007 Trail Plan by Halff Associates, Austin; and University Drive Pedestrian Improvements Master Plan by Schrickel Rollins, Arlington.

Three Texas Projects Win *residential architect* Awards

The ninth annual *residential architect* Design Awards were presented to three Texas projects among the 36 award-winning projects. Stonehenge Residence, located in Austin, received the Merit award in the renovation category. The project was designed by Juan Miró, AIA and Miguel Rivera, AIA of Miró Rivera Architects. Prototype Infill Housing: Throckmorton Site, located in Dallas, received a Merit award in the multifamily category. The project was designed by Edward M. Baum, FAIA of Edward M. Baum FAIA, Architect. Pizza Porch, located in Dallas, also received a Merit award in the outbuilding category. The project was designed by Dan Shipley, FAIA of Shipley Architects. More than 1,300 entries were received in 15 categories. The jury comprised of six distinguished architects bestowed one Judges' award, 18 Merit awards, 16 Grand awards, and one Project of the Year.

First Green Residential Remodeling Guidelines Launched

The American Society of Interior Designers Foundation and the U.S. Green Building Council launched the nation's first green residential remodeling guidelines at a press conference held in New Orleans on March 14. Referred to as REGREEN Guidelines, the program is designed to provide professionals and homeowners with the resources and tools necessary to make their home remodeling projects ecologically aware. The guidelines can be applied to a variety of projects ranging from remodeling a kitchen to executing a full-scale renovation. The market for residential remodeling has topped $200 billion per year and is projected to double within the next five years. As homeowners are increasingly considering family health and well-being, rising energy costs, and the environment, the REGREEN Guidelines teach people how to reduce energy use and lower utility bills, as well as ways of reducing carbon footprints. The REGREEN Guidelines are accompanied by case studies and address the major elements of green renovation projects, including the site of the home, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Access a full list of the REGREEN Guidelines at *www.regreenprogram.org or www.thegreenhomeguide.org*.

Updated ASID Web Site Serves As a Tool For Designers

The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) has created a new, redesigned Web site developed through the collaboration of ASID members and consumers. Design professionals can now use the product finder, access up-to-date information on current issues such as sustainability and universal design, and read about design legislation. The site also provides the newest research on the impact of interior design in our daily lives. Visit *www.asid.org* for more information.

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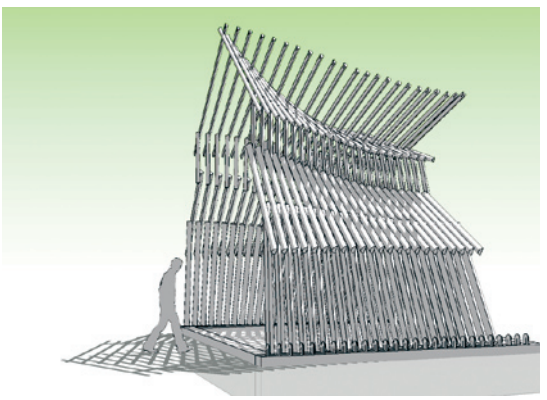

Nature's Sway

Rocking in the wind with the trees, a rustic outdoor chapel suggests openness to all beliefs

by MURRAY LEGGE, AIA

Built on the banks of Lake Bastrop this interfaith chapel forms a contemplative moment within the pine forest just east of Austin. Commissioned by the Boy Scouts of America Capitol Area Council, the open-air structure hosts all manner of religious gatherings. The gate-like structure, oriented east to west, frames a view across the lake of the setting sun.

The precision and simplicity of the frame geometry plays off the rustic quality of the sawn cedar members that vary in refinement, from the roughest at the bottom to the most refined at the top. The lower 4x10-inch members were sawn on two sides from 10-inch diameter cedar logs. Upper frame elements transition to sawn two-side 4x8-inch to sawn four-side 3x6-inch, then finally to sawn four-side 2x4-inch members that cross at the top of the frames.

The building design grew out of a computer modeling exercise that I conducted with students in an advanced design studio at UT Austin. The exercise demonstrated how very complex forms can occur by repeating a simple combination of basic computer model parts. As the design developed, the computer model became a tool to identify the exact number and size of wood members, as well as apply cost data and communicate information to a local saw mill. The design team also sent digital plate profiles to a steel fabricator who cut the plates using a CNC (computer numerically controlled) machine.

Built for approximately $40,000, the chapel was designed by LZT Architects (Herman Thun, Jr., AIA, Lucas Brown, Valerie Valdez, and myself). Structural engineers for the project were David Powel, PE, and Joelle Rosentswieg, PE. The contractor was David Moore.

Each of the 22 frames is composed of eight members interconnected with steel plates and bolts. The identical frames, bundled together horizontally by two cables in tension, rotate incrementally to create an arcing in plan. Since the lower members are wider and become narrower toward the top, the upper members do not touch and are free to sway in the wind along with the pine trees of the surrounding forest. The frame rotation's fluid quality, like the movement of water in the lake beyond, also implies mutability, a character that strengthens the building's form to its program, that of an interfaith chapel.

Murray Legge, AIA, is a principal of LZT Architects in Austin.

IMAGES BY MURRAY LEGGE, AIA

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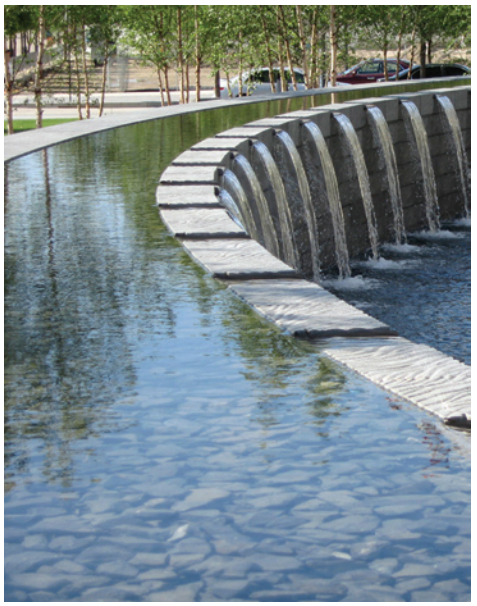

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